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WINTER EVENINGS

AT

HOME.

A Poem.

BY

THOMAS BELL,

AUTHOR OF "THE RUINS OF LIVEDEN," "THE RURAL ALBUM,"
ETC., ETC.

Rura placent mihi.

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PREFACE.

ENCOURAGED by the success attending his former literary labours, the Author ventures upon another, with a solicitude natural to one whose retired situation in a country village precludes him from advantages he otherwise might have enjoyed. But Nature spreads her book open before everyone; and, if they will but read it rightly, offers a never-failing subject for the pen and the pencil. The Author has availed himself of this, and has endeavoured to embody his thoughts, as, in the stillness of a winter's evening, they arose to his imagination. Many were sketched in the days of his youth, and have been thrown aside, and nearly forgotten; till, in the varied vicissitudes of a long life, they came again before him, are here collected, and assume the form in which the reader now sees them.

Seneca says: "He that is well employed in his study, though he may seem to do nothing, does the greatest things yet of all others." With such an authority before him, the Author trusts that it will not be thought presumption in him

to follow so good an example, and that the occupation of *his* leisure hours may not be found totally uninteresting. His object is to blend instruction with amusement, and to draw from everyday occurrences something to elevate the heart, and lead it through Nature up to Nature's God!

He freely confesses that he is not indifferent to the good opinion of the world, and that his greatest pride is to retain that patronage which has been so liberally extended to his former publications. But he is aware that, to attain this, "He must do things worth writing, or write things worth reading."* He humbly makes the attempt, and with doubt, not unmixed with hope, he commits his little volume to the public.

But if there is a pain in poetic labours, so, on the other hand, is there a counterbalancing pleasure.

> "Sweet is the poet's toil, and sweet the task
> To guide the pliant fancy, and to give
> To airy dreams a substance and a name."

None have felt this more than the Author of the present work. It has been to him a source of delightful amusement in health, and a consolation under heavy afflictions. He trusts it may be allowed to speak for him; though he is well aware that merit alone deserves the palm, whether at-

* Pliny.

tained in College Halls, beneath the gilded domes of aristocracy, or the humble roof of the cottage!

The Author prefers blank verse for the expression of his feelings. He offers no apology for this. Blank verse has been said to be "the poetry of the heart, and rhyme that of the ear." This may be considered a matter of taste; but the poetry of Milton, of Thompson, and Cowper, can never lose its hold upon the heart, let it be placed in competition with any other style of writing, however fashionable it may be—and fashion has more to do with this than is generally supposed. Read some of Shakspear's beautiful passages; for instance,—

> "She never told her love,
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought;
> And, with a green and yellow melancholy,
> She sat like patience on a monument
> Smiling at grief."—*Twelfth Night.*

Could rhyme add force to this, or give more expression to its beauty? Rhyme, however, is certainly more pleasantly adapted for short pieces—love, sentiment, &c. Each has its charms, and will have its admirers. Perhaps they should be more blended in a volume of poetry, written for the amusement, and to please the taste of different readers, than is generally the case. The ear tires if suffered to dwell too long upon one strain, however pleasing the melody may be.

For this reason, also, he has divided his work into portions, or evenings, each complete and distinct in itself; and in this he has followed the example of many writers, ancient and modern, whose works are still referred to as standards of taste.

In returning thanks to his numerous and liberal Subscribers, the Author is at a loss for words to express his feelings. Nor can he launch his little bark on the uncertain ocean of public favour, without the most grateful acknowledgments to those kind friends who undertook its revision, and whose superintending care has brought it to so successful a commencement of its voyage.

T. BELL.

The Cottage, Barnwell,
April, 1856.

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ERRATA.

Owing to the distance of the Author from the press a few typographical errors and omissions have occurred :—

Page 2, line 11, for *an* read *and.*
Page 18, line 7 of Motto, for *hollow'd* read *halloo'd.*
Page 19, line 20, for *broudly* read *proudly.*
Page 57, line 21, for *pallid* read *bloodless.*
Page 76, line 3, for *path* read *pall.*
Page 76, line 11, for *join'd* read *joy'd.*
Page 79, line 23, for *child* read *girl.*
Page 82, line 21, for *settling* read *sitting.*
Page 84, line 1, for *his* read *her.*
Page 89, line 22, for *minds* read *sounds.*

WINTER EVENINGS AT HOME.

First Evening.

"The love of his home on each heart is impress'd,
And man seeks his home as the bird seeks its nest;
'Twas granted to him as a boon from the skies,
Which farther he wanders the more he will prize."

I SING the Cottage now, and Cottage Scenes,
And War and Victory on battle plains;
Of Home, and Rural Walks, and Hunting Fields—
I, who so lately tuned my harp to sing
Of "Woman's Smiles" and "Gentle Woman's Tears;"
And strove in simple strains to bring to view
The "Old Arm Chair,"* with padded sides and back,

* See "Rural Album," by the same Author.

And nails of brass, in chimney corner plac'd.
And where so meet as 'neath a cottage roof,
To sing of woman's love and old arm chairs,
And other relics left to mem'ry dear,
And by-gone days of happiness and hope,
When smiling youth, with heart unscath'd by care,
Look'd through a vista ever green and gay,
Anticipating many years of life,
Adorn'd with sparkling rosy hours of joy;
With suns for ever bright, with cloudless skies,
An garlands, studded round with blooming flow'rs,
Whose fragrant beauty grac'd his early sports!

May then my Muse, which rather seeks the earth
Than soars to heaven, attempt once more to sing,
And paint in humble verse the joys of Home,
And all the pure delights of rural life.
Now, while the heavens are black with circling clouds,
And bois'trous winds, which through the garden sweep,
And chill the autumn flowers, which lately bloom'd,
The Aster and Chrysanthemum, the last
And gaudy relics of the fading year;
Yet still I love to paint the threat'ning storm,
Or, deeply musing by my cottage fire,
Enjoy its warmth, and moralise its blaze.

O Home, sweet Home!
There is a something in thy magic name,
A healing balm upon thy wings, to cheer
And bear us up against the storms of fate,

And all the varied ills that harass man
In life's uncertain voyage. Through the range
Of nature's living works this feeling glows,
And actuates them all. The timid dove,
When threat'ning clouds oppress the dark'ned sky,
To her accustom'd nest for safety flies;
The leopard seeks his lair; and reasoning man
Turns to his home for shelter and repose.
And, whether plac'd on Afric's burning sands,
Or midst the frozen snows of Northern climes,
In crowded cities or on tented plains,
In marble palaces or thatched cot,
That spot is sacred and becomes his Home!

So range my varied thoughts. Impressive some,
Some light as air. And thus my wand'ring Muse
Roves through the winter's night, nor heeds the wind,
That blows unceasing o'er my humble roof.
While dreams of sunny climes, and painted flowers
That never fade—of innocence, and love
As pure as that which glow'd in Paradise,
Ere sin and death had left their seal on man,
Entrance my heart, and all its cares beguile;
For though to one small spot at home confin'd,
The roving muse flies forth uncheck'd—through earth
To heaven—skims o'er the seas—to distant climes
Wends her bold way. And meditating much
On all she sees and hears, she notes them down,
And shews, as in a glass, the changing scenes,
And fairy visions pictur'd on the mind.

And frown not, reader, on the poet's toil,
Nor call it plagiary, if on fancy's wing,
When wand'ring through the well-trod path to fame,
He, sketching beauties others drew, should use
The selfsame brush another's hand employ'd.
For striking thoughts, imbib'd in early youth,
Retain their deep impressions in our age—
Roam through the brain uncertain of their home,
Till, call'd to life by some electric touch,
Their blossoms bloom again. The flowers remain
And flourish; to the eye look fresh and gay,
Although their native climate be unknown.

Hail, social intercourse! Delightful power!
In union blended with the joys of home.
Thou art a pleasant garden, set around
With tempting fruits and ever blooming flowers,
Which change their hues with every sunny ray,
And every passing shower, and yet retain
Their fragrant sweetness to enliven man!
Now, while the wintry winds howl shrilly round,
And shake the leafless oaks, and wildly rage
With hoarse unearthly moanings o'er the roof,
How sweet the converse of the friend we love,
To soothe the languid heart, and freely share
Another's joys and sorrows with his own;
To raise the drooping spirits with his smile;
To cheat the hours with oft-repeated tales
Of distant days, when peace and gladness cheer'd
The guileless breast; of daring feats of youth,

And schoolboy frolics cherish'd still in age.
Anon! the blust'ring tempest brings to mind
The sailor's dangers on the treach'rous deep;
The soldier's scars in fields of honor won;
Of Alma—Inkermann—Sebastopol!
Or more immediate misery at home,
The woes of virtue shrinking from the frown
Of vice luxurious; or the orphan's wants;
Or widow's tears, when memory recalls
Past scenes of happiness. Come, gentle guest,
Soft pity come, and over human woes
Thy melting influence shed! Inspire the pen,
And teach the sympathising heart to feel
The cares of poverty. 'Tis heaven alone,
That in commiseration kindly spares,
And shields us from its wants. Go then, ye rich,
Ye powerful and great, with plenty bless'd,
For whom the splendid board of grandeur waits,
With dainties cull'd from every distant clime,
Go and consider well the bitter crust
Of age and penury. See, at his task,
His daily task upon the public road,
Cold and laborious, the pauper bends
O'er work more suited to the strength of youth,
Than to the wither'd sinews of a man
Of three-score-years-and-ten! In winter's snow,
Or in the scorching heat of summer suns,
His measur'd work he ceaselessly pursues,
Alike regardless of the stranger's step,
Or of the noble's equipage, that whirls

A cloud of blinding dust around his head.
Work on, old man, thy toil will soon be o'er,
The day be spent, and peaceful evening come;
What though thy cot be lowly; though thy fare
Be coarse and scanty, earn'd by honest toil?
Tis far more welcome to a thankful mind,
Than luscious viands to the epicure.
Yet still 'tis sad thou should'st be thus employ'd,
From earliest dawn until the dewy eve,
When thy grey hairs and aching limbs require
Both ease and rest! But let us not repine;
For what is man? The heir to care and toil.
Nor rich, nor poor, can here exemption claim
From this decree. Man was not born to spend
An idle, useless, selfish life on earth,
To eat, and drink, and pamper up the flesh,
That soon shall form a banquet for the worms;
But all his station's duties to observe.
If poor, to work contentedly for bread,
With gratitude to Him who watches all,
And gives him strength to labour; and if storms
Of troubled sorrow or afflictive want
Lash into foam the troubled sea of life,
And threaten to o'erwhelm him with its waves,
To bow submissively to God, whose word
Can make them cease, or make their fury speed
His lab'ring mortal vessel on its way
To rest—eternal, blissful rest—in Heaven!
If rich, man has a duty to discharge,
Which angels e'en might wish, but can't perform.

They sympathise, indeed, with human woes,
With suff'ring sickness, and with pining need,
And, sent as ministering spirits, they
Support the mourning, sinking soul, and give
A joyous resignation to the will
Of Him who is alike the Lord of All!
'Tis thine, rich man! to give the hungry bread,
To break oppression's shackles, and befriend
The injur'd and the innocent, and strive
To lessen all the miseries of man.
And thus shalt thou yield up a good account
Of all the talents lent thee to improve,
Return thy Lord with usury his own,
And plead with greater hope for pard'ning grace.

Thrice happy he who to his God can turn
With willing mind, humility, and hope,
And at the footstool of his Maker bow,
With cheerful countenance and love sincere.
God asks not outward signs of woe from man,
But seeks the contrite and repentant heart,
And listens more in mercy to the prayer—
The simple prayer of penitence and praise—
When humbly offer'd up in stedfast faith,
Than to the organ's chant, or the full choir
That hymn their Maker, yet attune their chords
More to the ear than to the praise of God.

Come, mild Religion, truest source of joy,
And heav'nly peace, infuse thy soothing power,

Serenely calm; not dress'd in terrors wild,
Or superstition's cowl, but come array'd
In all thy native sweetness, unadorn'd.
'Tis thus I hail thee in the winter's night,
When darkness reigns, and the desponding breast,
Weigh'd down by gloom oppressive, asks support.
And as the sun dispels the low'ring mists
That gather round and hide the mountain's brow,
So can thy smile restore the sinking soul
To happiness and peace. To thee we look,
When sickness pains us, or misfortunes press,
Or when ungrateful man with chilling breath
Spurns from his door the friend whom once he sought.

Second Evening.

WAR! VICTORY!

THE CHARGE AT BALAKLAVA.

"Hark! to the cannons that boom o'er the wave;
Hark! to the cries and huzzas of the brave;
Hark! to the shouts that ascend to the sky;
Tell me, oh, tell me the reason and why?

"Merrily, merrily, do the bells ring;
Cheerily, cheerily, do the boys sing;
On tower and steeple see the flags fly;
Tell me, oh, tell me the reason and why?"—*Old Ballad.*

Another night, and lo! the clashing bells,
And shouting voices of the distant crowd,
Announce a victory on flood or field!
As Englishmen we feel it and rejoice,
As Christians mourn its sad realities.
For what these pealing bells, and what these shouts,
But knells for soldiers slain and soldiers' graves,

For warriors wounded, and for those who fall
By wasting pestilence and awful death!

My Muse delights not in the battle field,
Or on the miseries of war to dwell;
Yet warm with love of country, and the pride
Engender'd in the heart by deeds of arms,
By British valour gained, it fain would strive
To find a place among the lays of old,
By minstrels chaunted to the tuneful harp
In old baronial hall, or with those strains
Which Homer sung, the fight on Alma's height
And Inkermann's proud day, where, side by side,
Bold Britons, join'd with Gallia's noble sons,
Defied the wand'ring hordes and servile bands
Of Russia's countless hosts, and with stout hearts,
Midst blood and death, cheer'd on to victory!

And chief among these scenes of war and strife,
While yet the din of battle on the ear
At distance breaks, and the horizon looms
With heavy clouds, portending coming storms,
Be here another bloody fight enroll'd,
Which, when the Muse that sung it is forgot,
And the bold hearts that fought it sleep in peace,
Shall stand recorded in our country's page,
And to our children's children tell the tale.

Where the rude heights of Balaklava rise,
And overlook the Euxine's troubled sea,

Dashing its foaming billows to the sky,
And rich with wrecks of noble argosies,
Behold the battle in its fury rage!
No fancy here is needed to portray
Th' heroic deeds of England's gallant sons.
See o'er the blazing field, with arm uprais'd,
The noble leader of his chosen band,
He deals around upon th' embattled foe
The stroke of death; o'erleaps th' embrasur'd wall,
Which, like the lightning's flash, with glaring bolt,
Vomits its blaze of wild destruction round!
And midst the horrors of the battle field,
He cheers his men e'en to the cannon's mouth,
To victory! to honour! or the grave!

Bright gleams his flashing sword, while streams of fire
Pour o'er his head the leaden bolts of fate!
He heeds them not, but holds his daring course,
Like some war spirit of another world;
And like the Roman patriot of old,
To save his country in the day of wrath,
Leaps at the yawning gulf that opes its mouth
Of blazing light to welcome him to death!

Yes, this is war! This Balaklava's fight,
Which from his car the god of armies sees,
And sees exulting. With a smile beholds
His hero's daring deeds, and o'er him throws
His wide protecting shield, and from his breast
Turns the wild Cossack's murd'rous lance aside;

Wards off the pointed rifle's fatal aim,
And loud exploding shell, which, scatt'ring wide
Its fiery fragments o'er the warrior's head,
Rings through the sky its shrill funereal knell!

And mark the war-horse, with his head erect,
With outstretch'd neck, and flashing eyes that glare
Defiance on the hostile hosts around,
With steaming flanks, impatient of control,
Yet still obedient to the guiding rein!
There, where the battle rages, hand to hand,
And sword to lance, cannon to naked breasts,
And British hearts to pointed steel and flame,—
There flies the dauntless steed, and darts along,
Through the whole serried ranks of fire and smoke,
And bears his noble rider through the field,
Unhurt and scathless, midst the scenes of death!

Nor let his gallant soldiers be unsung,
Who through th' opposing ranks of men and horse,
And bristling lances pointing to their breasts,
With eager hearts, as rushing to a chase,
Their noble chieftain follow to the field,
Obedient to death! His flashing sword
Their light to glory, and his cheering voice
The echo of their hopes to win or die!
How many fought that day the fight for life,
How many gallant warriors ceas'd to breathe
At eve, that morning's dawn beheld array'd
In arms, and eager for the deadly fray;

And, ah! how many found a soldier's grave!
They fell as heroes fall! Their country's pride,
Their names remember'd in the warlike song
And on the marble monument inscrib'd,
To live again in some heroic tale,
To tell to future ages yet unborn
How Britons conquer'd and how Britons died!

Yes, this is fame! This Balaklava's charge,
Shown on the canvass by the artist's skill,
And by the Muses sung, in the same lay
With Wallace, Marlborough, and Wellington!
And in its country's chronicles to bear
Its hero's name in honour and renown
Far as the sun its golden rays extend.
Yet still proud fame, with all thy boasted charms,
With all thy glories and with all thy state,
Thou a double-fac'd, deceitful goddess art,
On one side glitt'ring with a golden clasp,
The other wrapt in sable weeds and tears!

'Tis o'er! the fight is done! and death dismay'd,
Rests on his spear, reclining from his work
Of slaughter and of blood! A stillness reigns
Distressing to the ear, or only broke
By the last groan that marks the agony
Of some poor victim in his dying pangs.
A pale and lurid light gleams through the sky,
More wild and more appalling to the sense
Than is the vivid flash from bursting shell,

Or the red fury from the cannon's mouth,
Or heaven's artillery in its angriest mood,
As through the midnight sky it rolls along.

What now, ye flatt'ring vanities of youth,
What are ye now? What now the visions wild
That from a mother's arms and fondest hopes,
Could tear the last sad relic of her love!
What are ye now? A painted sepulchre;
A magic glass, reflecting fair but false!
What now the scarlet coat, the epaulette,
The gorget and the sash? What now the plume,
That o'er the helmet spread in graceful pride,
And mark'd the beatings of its wearer's heart,
Responsive to each step? All gone and fled!
The tears alone remain to those most dear!
The graves, half hid by waving grass, and mark'd
By rudely sculptur'd cross, memorials sad,
Shall point the spot of Balaklava's fight,
In glory bright as is the rising morn,
Dark as the night in sorrow and in woe!

How many tender ties does battle break;
How many tears from widow'd mothers fall;
How many broken maiden's hearts, and sighs
For those we love, are caused by victory!
O war, insatiate war! What are thy claims?
What are thy charms to lead a nation's pride,
Our stoutest hearts, the noble and the brave,
To slaughter and to death? "'Tis honour calls,"

The ready soldier cries! The patriot lays
His outspread hand upon his breast and says,
"My country's fame demands the sacrifice!
'Tis England's voice, as rais'd in days of yore,
To aid the weak against the proud and strong,
Th' oppress'd against th' oppressor, and to turn
The powerful arm of tyranny from those
Who cannot help themselves." All this is well,
'Tis good and noble, and in British hearts
Th' appeal will meet with ready sympathy.
It speaks already, from her cliff-bound shores,
By ocean lash'd, to where her inland plains
Spread their rich treasures to the rural swain.
Rous'd by the din of war, and warm'd by blood
That flows unsullied in his Saxon veins,
The peasant listens, and with joyous heart,
Girds on the sword and hastens to the field.
Proud of her sons, indeed, may England be,
And of her daughters, too, by pity led
To brave the ocean's waves, and noxious skies
Of pestilence and death, to smooth the path
That leads the warrior to a distant grave,
Or happier still, to nurse him into life,
And send him smiling to his home again.
There is a sweetness in a woman's voice,
So kind, so soothing in the hour of pain;
So soft her touch, that through the trembling frame
It darts with wild electric force, and lulls
The deepest anguish and the keenest smart.

Sisters of Mercy! Kindred of the heart
To all who feel their fellow-creatures' woes!
Allied to heaven by pity's tenderest ties
And Christian charity! To you the Muse,
With swelling heart, devotes the willing lay,
And offers up a grateful nation's praise.
I mark your footsteps o'er the battle field,
Strew'd with the wreck of human life, and death,
And worse than death, the wounded and the maim'd;
Giving the cooling draught to feverish pain,
Or bending lowly o'er the blood-stain'd couch,
Receive the dying soldier's prayer to heaven!

These are the deeds of mercy, and the acts
Of soft humanity; kind woman's deeds,
Call'd into life by feelings that their hearts
Inherit with their sex; feelings which man,
Form'd in a rougher mould, beholds with pride,
And angels view with sympathy and love.*

Nor let the Muse, while thus she sings of war,
Forget the patriotic claim of those

* "Miss Nightingale is a 'ministering angel' in these hospitals, and as her slender form glides along each corridor every poor fellow's face softens with gratitude at the sight of her. She may be observed alone, when silence and darkness have settled down on those miles of prostrate sick, with a little lamp in her hand, making her solitary rounds. No one who has observed her fragile figure and delicate health can avoid misgivings lest these should fail."—*Mr. Macdonald's Letter to the Times.*

Who strive to lessen with a ready hand
The ills and miseries that warfare bring.
Through the throng'd streets of commerce and of trade,
From the proud palace to the humble cot,
From every quarter of this favour'd isle,
Man joins with man, children with crippled age,
The poor with wealth, to show their sympathy
For those who suffer in their country's cause.
'Tis noble, and displays a nation proud
And jealous of its right of doing good.
God views with favouring eye from mercy's seat
The deeds of mercy! 'Tis heav'n's attribute,
And brings man nearer to his God, who is
Mercy itself, in pity and in love!

Third Evening.

THE MILTON HUNT.

" My hounds are bred out of the Spartan breed,
So flew'd, so sanded: and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook'd-kneed, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls,
Swift in pursuit, and match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each—a cry more tunable
Was never hollow'd to, nor cheer'd with horn."—*Shakspeare.*

FAIR sylvan Goddess of the Woods and Groves,
Inspire thine humble votary to sing
The soul-inspiring pleasures of the Chase,
The glory of that "Noble Science" which
Has been for ages dear to British hearts;
Has formed the lively theme of cheering songs
In "auld lang syne," and of the stirring tales
Our ancestors at merry Christmas-tide,
While blaz'd the yule block on the ample hearth,

Told to their hardy sons, who glow'd to share
The daring pleasures of the cheerful hunt,
And emulate the feats their sires perform'd.

To Milton's lordly Hall, and woods and park,
Reflected in thy limpid stream, O Nen!
As thou pursu'st thy winding course to Burg,*
Whose spires and pinnacles, for ages past,
Have been the glory of our Fatherland,
The Muse would wing her flight at early dawn
To view the start, e'er yet the drizzling veil
Which hides the face of nature is withdrawn.

Hark! how the winding of the huntsman's horn
Awakes all nature! E'en the lifeless woods
Return their answers to the stirring call.
The rooks, arous'd, rise from their lofty roosts,
And with loud cawings to the horn respond.
The eager hounds forth from their kennels rush,
And with deep bayings greet the well-known sound.
The aged hunter, once his owner's boast,
Who broudly bore in days gone by his lord
The lengthen'd chase throughout, but suffer'd now
To spend his latter days in peaceful rest,
Starts at the wonted note, erects his head
And anxious ears, and shakes his flowing mane;
To every quarter turns his restless eyes,
Stamps on the yielding turf, and neighs and sniffs

* Peterborough.

The morning breeze,—then like the wind he speeds,
Forgetful of his failing strength, to share,
Unsought, the wild excitement of the field.
The graceful deer, in gazing groups around,
Lift up their antler'd heads with timid stare,
Then start with sudden speed—as quickly stop—
Peer through the haze, and listen to the sounds,
Then wildly take to flight and disappear.
The sportsman, waken'd by the welcome notes,
Forsakes his downy bed; his hunter mounts,
And joins the field. While the declining year,
Though dress'd in chilling garb, smiles on the sport
That glads the fields and makes the country gay,
And every face with animation beams.

Where is the man, however great he be,
Aye! or "faire ladye," too, who does not feel
The pulse beat higher, as th' inspiring pack
With ardour rushes past? hound answ'ring hound
With deep-ton'd voice, urging each other on,
In notes of wildest melody, to which
The sylvan goddess of the chase herself
Might lend a list'ning ear! This is the sport
That England loves to share, and these the sounds
That England's hardy sons delight to hear!
That make the sorrow-stricken spirits rise
Light and elastic as the morning air;
Stamp on the brow the seal of ruddy health;
Give to the frame fresh vigour to endure,
And to the mind new thoughts in which to range,

As through a field of ever-blooming flow'rs,
Which change their hue with ev'ry passing breeze,
Yet show new loveliness in ev'ry change.

Say, shall the sons of Britons still enjoy
The healthful pleasures of th' exciting chase,
As did their dauntless sires? Will this, the best,
The choicest, noblest of Old England's sports,
Which gives to English hearths their cheerful tone,
And makes stern winter smile through all his snows,
Withstand the innovating hand of time?

E'en now the fell destroyer's steps are near!
Ah! see the iron roads of commerce run
Through ev'ry field and intercept our paths,
Encroach upon our thresholds, once so dear
And sacred held, as portions of those homes
No foot could violate, or hand could touch!
They circumscribe and bind in iron bonds
The once unbounded scope of rural life,
Too much abridg'd already and confin'd;
Disturb the pleasures that our nature loves
T' enjoy in peace, and drive to distant lands
Our country's boast—the noble and the great—
To seek those comforts now denied them here!

The very air, so sweet and balmy once,
Now spreads abroad its impregnations, rank
With gaseous vapours and with scorching dust;
Contaminates the sweets of ev'ry flow'r;

Destroys the lustre of the verdant bough,
Where once the clear and pearly dew-drop shone
In glist'ning purity; and taints the soil
And all the vegetable world with blight;
(And who shall say the Muse exaggerates?)
Sows deep within the human frame the seeds
Of fell disease, of atrophy, and death!

And what advantage have these changes wrought?
What have we gained? What benefit secur'd
For all the good we tamely sacrifice
To commerce and to gold? Shall we consent
For filthy lucre's sake to blast our joys?
Shall we betray our country's fav'rite sport
Through quenchless lust of gain? Wealth may be bought
At far too dear a price; our health too soon
Exchang'd for grandeur, luxury, and pride!

Let commerce claim the seas: the ocean wide
Extends her arms, her ample bosom spreads,
To give it welcome and convey its stores!
And man, endow'd with new and mighty powers,
Has made the earth his footstool and his slave;
Has spann'd the world, as with a mighty bridge,
Extending North and South—from Pole to Pole—
And from the rising to the setting sun!

Great are thy powers, O steam! More wond'rous still
Th' electric fluid darting through the sky
To wait on man and act at his command,

Annihilating space; and, at his nod,
Conveying thought, swift as the whirlwind's speed,
Or as the lightning's flash—beneath the sea,
Or on the ambient air, or in the earth—
Unseen—unheard; for all the skill of man
Fails this mysterious agent to reveal!

Let commerce leave us then our native fields
To wander in, our gentle hills to climb,
Our verdant vallies, and our winding streams,
Our private pleasures, and our public sports,
Unscath'd, and sacred from the blighting touch
Of those who, dead to rural happiness,
Would crush with pow'r the joys they cannot feel,
To quench their raging thirst with cursed gold!

But calm thine indignation, Muse, and plume
Thy ruffled wings afresh. Resume the strain
Which celebrates the glories of the field,
For hills, and dales, and plains are left us yet,
And woods and coverts for the wily fox,
And Britons still are found who love the chase.

Proclaim this truth, ye sons of British sires,
And to your children's children hand it down,
That long as Milton's honour'd race survives,
Heedless of rails, of cuttings, banks, or steam,
Of puffing, coughing, hissing, flying trains,
Of screeching whistles, and of streams of smoke,
That float like royal pendants on the breeze,

In triumph o'er the country steam invades,—
So long the voices of the well-train'd hounds,
So long the neighings of the prancing steeds,
So long the huntsman's horn our land shall cheer;
Nor shall they ever cease, till Father Time
Himself shall call us from the field away!

And here the thankful Muse would humbly tend
The fervent incense of a grateful heart
To those among our noblest peers enroll'd,
But dignified by virtue more than birth,
Who from their high estate look down, and deign
To smile encouragement on him who strives
With timid steps Mount Helicon to climb,
And from its fountain quaff enliv'ning draughts
T' inspire his song; and lend their noble names
To grace the poet's page; and, like the sun,
Which spreads its fertilizing beams o'er all,
Can draw from some sequester'd lonely spot
The bashful flow'r, that hides its timid head,
Afraid to brave the cold inclement sky;
Can shield it from the blast, and, with a breath,
Expand its leaves and warm it into life.

Hark to the rustling of the silent pack,
As leisurely they wind their devious way,
At first unseen, but, as their steps advance,
Appearing dimly through the morning mist
A magnified, confus'd, and shapeless mass
Of animated life, obscurely seen,

Like objects in a rich dissolving view,
Ere yet its perfect splendour stands reveal'd.

But now behold the noble, vig'rous hounds
In all their beauty burst upon the sight,
And all obedient to the huntsman's voice,
Who with a conscious pride surveys his charge
He loves so well, and guides their willing feet
Through lanes, and fields, and meadows to the spot
Appointed for the meet of hounds and steeds.
See how, experienc'd when to cheer or chide,
He calls each straggler back, and how they run
A compact body in close order rang'd,
Though free not wild, and playful though restrain'd,
A phalanx firm, as were the Royal Guards
At Waterloo, or at the deadly strife
On Alma's heights, where Russians fought and fled,
Where many heroes sleep, whose laurel crowns
Are blended with the mournful cypress wreath.

And now the sun beams forth with brighter ray,
Evaporates the chilling mists of morn,
And animates all nature with its smiles.
The huntsman and his eager hounds await,
Near Barnwell's* massive Castle's ruin'd walls,
Their noble owner's presence, and for those
Bold sportsmen who from ev'ry quarter ride,
To share the joy and triumph of the day.

* Barnwell Castle, Northamptonshire.

And where so meet as near some castle walls,
Or old baronial tower, with ivy crown'd,
Relics of ancient times, to have these joys
And manly sports of by-gone days renew'd.

Mark well the brilliant scene that now appears,
When ev'ry road and pathway pours a stream
Of mounted horsemen, and of neighing steeds,
To swell the gath'ring of the hunting field.
Here noble lords, esquires, and yeomen meet,
And youths from Cam and Isis, who forsake
Their musty volumes for the lively chase.
Mov'd by the influence of this genial sport,
A gen'rous, kind equality prevails;
For all as banded brothers fraternize:
E'en rank abates its dignity and state,
And greets the lowly with a friendly smile.
Here, too, the gentler sex are often found,
To waft a welcome with the snowy hand
To those they love—a brother, or a friend,
Or to some dearer favour'd swain, who claims
Their tenderest regards. Be kind, ye Fates;
And let their smile be answer'd by a smile,
And all their love with ardour be return'd.

But now the sign is giv'n, the eager hounds,
Led by that vet'ran in the sylvan sport,
The hardy huntsman, Sebright, for his skill
Both in the kennel and the field renown'd
Throughout the hunting world, nor less esteem'd

For courtesy and kindness shown to all,
Wend their glad way to draw th' entangled copse,
Where, midst thick briars and thorns, the flow'ring gorse
In rich profusion shows her golden cups,
And yields a covert for the skulking fox.
Here Carter, too, the well-known whipper-in,
Who one day hopes to bear a huntsman's horn,
And show his science in this art he learn'd
From such a master, chides each erring hound.

See the whole field with animation mov'd,
As each bold rider and his chafing steed
Makes for the cover, anxious for the chase.

Homer of old immortalized in verse
Those Grecian heroes who their vessels launch'd
To brave the dangers of th' Ægean seas,
And wreak their vengeance on the sons of Troy.
And shall my Muse neglect to celebrate
Those heroes, Britain's noblest, hardiest sons,
Who, at the sound of echoing horn and hound,
Rush to the field, led on by Sebright's voice,
And gallant cry, "Hark, forward! Hark, away!"

Wake up, my Muse, and sing in flowing verse
The praise of those who patronize the hunt.
But who shall here a prior notice claim,
Or gain a niche of fame in Dian's bower?
Diana! Ah, that name recalls thy fate,
Actæon, who to timid stag transform'd,

Was doom'd, while tears thine antler'd cheeks bedew'd,
As thy desert for wanton, lawless looks,
By thy lov'd hounds to suffer, bleed, and die!

Hold hard, my Muse, thy wand'ring fancy check
From classic lore, which charm'd thy early youth,
And sing the members of the Milton Hunt.
And first in justice and in courtesy,
Never neglected in the hunting field,
The noble Earl behold, who in the chase
Exhilarating recreation seeks,
A healthy frame, and cheerfulness of mind;
Not proudly claiming, but from willing hearts
Receiving homage, as an honour due,
Not solely to his rank, but to his kind,
Considerate urbanity to all.
Next, dress'd in scarlet, see Lord Milton rides,
A first-flight man, and always close in view.
Not far behind him Huntley, Orton's Lord,
An old, tried, daring sportsman, who delights
To hunt a straight fox with a burning scent.
Bold as a lion, though he dearly loves
The Briton's home, prefers to chase the fox
Round Leighton, Hamerton, and Sawtry Gorse,
Through Buckworth, Monkswood, Washingley, and Holme,
Through Bythorn, Barnwell, Ashton, Elton Furze,
Or drive his flying steeds through Aberdeen,
Or on "Auld Reekie's Hills" to breathe fresh air,
Than "bell the cat" on Balaklava's steppes,
Or in Tchernaya's gorge, where sleep the brave,

Where heaves the turf o'er slaughter'd heaps of dead,
Or on the blood-stain'd heights of Inkermann,
Of many gallant deeds in arms the scene.
See troops of Birds, alive to Reynard's wiles,
All fast men in the field, who often win
The prize, the brush, as dear to huntsmen's pride
As is the captur'd, blood-stain'd, foeman's flag
To England's champions in the battle field.
Next Willow, carrying weight as feather light,
Mighty as Nimrod, fearless of a fall.
See Lindsey's cousin, always at his post
When duty calls, or friendship points the way;
A good and hearty fellow; keeping time
Either to chiming bells or echoing horn,
Be it on Sundays or on other days.
That thrusting horseman, Mossop, never lags,
But scorning raspers, bullfinches, and swamps,
He braves the perils of the fiery chase.
To honour Tomlin needs no mead of praise;
His motto's "Always ready;" sportsman staunch!
Here see the gallant high-bred Wells, of Holme,
Who loves a clipping burst and flying fox.
Here Sherrard and his neighbour Heathcote ride;
There Sandwich, too, the Lord of Hinchingbrook,
And Rust, who honour in the Senate seeks,
On snorting steeds, find pleasure in the chase.
Mark Shafto, like a Centaur, gallop on,
A first-rate, skilful rider, known to fame,
Long miss'd with sorrow from the Milton Hunt,
But now is welcom'd by the field again.

Nor would the Muse omit from honour's roll
The gallant chief of Balaklava's heights,*
Whose daring deeds in other lays she sings.
See Tryon, always welcome to the field,
Braving the perils of the headlong chase,
As did his noble sons the fiery darts
Of death and glory at Sebastopol.
There Lilford rides, the Lord of wide domains;
And Farming Woods, the good Fitzpatricks' heir,
Those ladies who still live in grateful hearts,
Whose names, all honour'd, shall for aye survive,
And bloom for ever fair, like flow'rs in spring.
The Smiths, by all the hunting field esteem'd,
Together hasten to th' enliv'ning scene.
There Vipan gently checks his chafing steed—
Vipan, an honour'd name through Ely's isle,
Than whom no truer sportsman joins the field.
And Day, of Worledge, known from boyish years
To love the sport and share in all its joys.
Here mark a vet'ran, dauntless in the chase,
For horsemanship renown'd, and splendid leaps,
Goodliff, the sire, and his aspiring sons,
Whom bursting runs, with no hold-hards, delight.
Lord John, of Morborn; Robert, Barham's Earl;
With Kirby, Webster, Arnesby, and George,
And Johnson, all keen vet'ran sportsmen, who
Ride well up to the hounds; no danger daunts
Their gallant spirits in the hunting field.

* Major-General the Earl of Cardigan.

See Faux and Jenkins, loving brothers, urge
Their well-trained hunters to the covert's side,
In hope their well-known talents to display,
And chase at rattling pace a ringing fox.
"Wansford in England," all renown'd by fame;
Ormond, to all the Hunt well known as one
Ready to ride, or lend, or sell a steed:
Are seldom absent from the gladsome scene.
And many a brave and manly heart beside,
In Senate celebrated and the field,
Who scape the Muse's eye, may here be found.
Here boys on ponies make their first essay,
And sturdy yeomen, clad in Sunday garbs,
Come for a gallop with th' unrivalled pack,
To educate their untrain'd four-year-olds.
The rural postman, too, with letter bags,
Astride his broken-kneed and wretched hack,
Unmindful of the fair maid's billet doux,
And heedless of the politician's ire,
And him who waits for latest Crimean news,
Forsakes his beat to tally-ho the hounds.
But, ah, among the worthies of the Hunt,
We miss poor Theed, whose loss we all deplore.
How proud would he to-day have been to join
This noble phalanx of good men and true.
But vain to him the huntsman's call or hounds!
He sleeps in peace! His last great leap is ta'en!
His chase is o'er! The horn winds "a la mort."

Now see them round the covert's side arrang'd,
Whilst crowds of villagers, a joyous group,

With eager looks to watch the pack thrown off.
The huntsman scans the copse with practis'd eye,
Prepar'd to cheer the hounds and lead the field.
Hush! 'Tis a find! The steady drawing hounds
Now open in full cry, as Reynard steals
Forth from the cover and the tangled brake.
The huntsman views him as he skims along,
And makes the covert and the air resound
With "Tally-ho!" "Hark forward!" is the cry.

Fain would my Muse in vivid colours paint
The cheerful scene the chase affords, and show,
As on a map, the varied mazy turns
And artful dodges of the cunning fox,
As he endeavours to elude his foes,
And leave behind the animated cries
That greet his presence as he mounts the hills,
And to the distant wolds directs his flight.
But vain th' attempt to follow up the chase,
In all its doublings and its winding turns,
Without a check, until mid-day is past,
And sombre evening comes to close the scene;
When jaded steeds and wearied lagging hounds,
The heavy run and clipping burst proclaim.
But mark the sportsman firm, erect, as when
He mingled in the sport at morning's dawn:
And see, dependent from his bridle front,
The hard-earn'd trophy of the day, the brush!
Dear to his pride as to the brave the flag
That wav'd defiance o'er the granite walls
Of Russian Cronstadt or Sebastopol.

Fourth Evening.

INDIA.

"Thine idol worship on the pile,
The drooping widow chains;
And superstition's cruel rites,
Religion's name profanes.
Where Juggernaut in demon-car,
O'er prostrate victims steals,
And immolates unnumber'd lives
Beneath his chariot wheels."

THE VILLAGE PASTOR.

"And as the bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new fledg'd offspring to the skies;
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way."—*Goldsmith.*

Now strike a diff'rent strain, my harp, and waft
My rambling Muse to those benighted climes
Where Ganges rolls its blood-polluted waves,
Rank with its heathen sacrifice, and stain'd
With human off'rings; where the mother casts,

Without remorse, her babe new-born away;
And where some willing victim meets his doom.
Ah, what avails that on its fruitful shores
The luscious tropic shows luxurious plants;
That there the banyan spreads its welcome shade,
And there the melon and the tam'rind yield
Their rich and cooling fruits to gladden man;
And fragrant flow'rs, diffusing sweet perfumes,
Are gay with ev'ry tint that nature gives;
And flutt'ring birds, with painted plumage deck'd:
Ah, what avails all this; when heathen pride
And superstition, cruelty and crime,
Pollute it all? See, on his spiky bed
Of pointed steel, with lacerated flesh,
Or crush'd beneath the wheels of Juggernaut,
Some writhing victim welt'ring in his blood!
Or, sinking on the blazing pyre, behold,
Midst frantic shouts and wild discordant joy,
The mourning widow droop her head and die!
What Christian eye can on these frenzies gaze,
And view the suicidal blood that's shed
For superstition's sake, without a tear?
What Christian heart can aught but horror feel,
And tremble at the wild demoniac rites
Of India's priests and India's deities?
And yet such gods and priests had England once,
When from the branches of some aged oak
The bearded Druids on their victims gaz'd,
And view'd with tranquil looks and uprais'd hands
Their dying pangs, and sermoniz'd in death!

In those dark days of wrath no chiming bells
On Sabbath rang to mark the holy day,
And call the peasant to the house of pray'r;
No sound of distant organ, clear and full,
Roll'd from her temples on the list'ning ear
Of him who on a summer's eve had stray'd
To wander in the woods of Albion.
Discordant were the sacred sounds, and mix'd
With crackling flames and groans of dying men!

Say, then, ye learned, in your wisdom, say
Whose love first chas'd these horrors from our land?
Why have we now in milder, modern days,
Primeval cursing chang'd to praise and pray'r?
Why, in the place of bloody off'rings, made
On hidden altars, shadow'd by some oak,
In woods embower'd deep—why have we now
The sacrifices of a contrite heart?
In lieu of death in some wild Druid's fire,
Why drink we freely, as we breathe the air,
The living waters from the fount of Heaven?
These priceless mercies spring from England's God!

A God of Love is the peculiar boast
Of Christianity. For, count the hosts,
The endless hosts of seers and deities,
Rever'd and worshipp'd in each pagan clime;
Hard masters all and mistresses they prove.
Christ asks not blood for sacrifice, but love!
And when his Cross is cast aside and scorn'd,

No yoke is easy and no worship light.
'Tis true some vain enthusiasts are found,
Who have for ages labour'd to enforce
With chains of adamant the bonds of Christ,
And on the backs of his disciples bind
Burdens too heavy for mankind to bear.
We own their sad existence, nor deny
That pride and error, cruelty and craft,
Have made a warlike standard of that Cross,
Whose sign is Peace, Good Will, and Love to Man!
And caus'd more blood to flow in Christian lands
Than idols rais'd in Ind or Mexico.

The monk's rough sackcloth and the cloister'd nook,
Shorn head, bare feet, the self-denying eye,
The flowing robe, the pilgrimage, the fast;
The vestal's veil that hides the bitter tear,
And weary nights in useless vigils spent,
With broken hearts, that soon will cease to beat:
These are not flowers, but noxious weeds, that mar
The purest soil of Gospel Truth and Love,
Nurtur'd by ignorance and spread by zeal.
The Love of Christ nor knows nor causes fear,
Nor cruel vows, nor self-inflicted lash,
Nor blood to flow; nor does it ask from man
More than a man can from his heart bestow,
In willing pray'r, and confidence and hope.
How happy then our favour'd land, which boasts
Of temples consecrated to the Lord,
In ev'ry village, town, and city plac'd,

Where rich and poor together met may raise
United pray'rs and praises to their God,
In solemn language, us'd in purest times
Of Christian Truth; where also is proclaim'd
The unadulterated Word of Life,
Free from the errors of a darken'd age;
Where ev'ry fold of Christ its pastor claims;
And what a blessing may that pastor prove
Who faithfully attends a willing flock!

"Would I describe a preacher such as Paul,
"Paul should himself direct me in the way."
Thus spoke the bard who tun'd his harp to sing
"Faith, Hope, and Charity;"* and taught me first,
As if by magic spell, to woo the Muse,
And led my fancy to the woods and groves,
And all the fairy scenes of rural life.
Sweet are his gentle warblings, and as sweet
The honied precepts of his guileless breast,
Drawn from the book of Holy Writ, to show
What the good shepherd of his flock should be.
Yet such is man, and such his wayward mind,
So prone to error, and so quick to see
The faults of others, and forget his own,
That even he—the poet of the heart—
Could for a moment dip his pen in gall,
And hold a picture up to public view,
O'er which in godly charity and love

* Cowper.

His Christian feelings should have thrown a veil.
But let it pass, and some good-natur'd tear
Perhaps may drop, as it has done before,
And blot the record from the erring page.

Fain would my grateful Muse attempt to draw
A perfect portrait of the man I love,
And in him paint the minister and friend,
As what a messenger of grace should be
To erring mortals. Prompt at duty's call,
As shepherd of his flock, to teach the young,
The thoughtless, and the gay—to help the weak,
To cheer the old, and heal the faint and sick,
To lead the doubting and the wav'ring mind
To place their trust in God, with holy truths,
Drawn from the faithful page of Holy Writ,
Which offers grace and happiness to all.
When weak from daily toil, and bow'd to earth
By poverty and age, the sick man seeks
His ready aid, he never seeks in vain;
He asks, and has, his counsel and his pray'rs.
Their pastor's voice his people love to hear,
And listen, though he chides, as does a child
To those kind words which from a parent flow.

This was the village pastor; lov'd by all:
In life he suffer'd much, but strove to feel
For other's woes, which he himself endur'd.
The cross he bore was heavy, still he learn'd
To pity griefs, which others with him shar'd;

And what he felt he taught; and what he taught
He practis'd daily 'mong his fellow men.
"He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all,
"Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way,"*
As shepherds in Judea went before
Their flocks, and call'd, not drove them to the fold.

He who would guide his people with success
In ways of peace and righteousness and joy,
Should ever strive to lead, not think to urge
By stern authority their steps to heav'n.
'Tis here so many err—so many fall,
And find their good intentions met with hate.
The inquisition fail'd not from its fires
And cruelties so much as that it strove
To bind the human mind in shackles, forg'd
By dark, disgusting ignorance and pride,
'Gainst which our reason ever must revolt.
But words of mild persuasion, kindly given
By one we know and reverence and love,
Will influence for good the rugged heart,
And soothe the anguish of a troubled soul.

In all the busy scenes of life I've pass'd,
Amidst its troubles and its cares, and not a few
Of disappointed hopes and projects vain,
That life has seen, as through its dreary vale
I've toil'd with weary steps and sinking heart

* Goldsmith.

For many long sad years, I've ever found
In those whom Providence has made my guides,
And whose kind sympathy and aid I sought,
Christians and friends in need, with hands to aid,
And hearts to feel, to comfort and advise,
And share the sorrows that they could not cure.
And as to me, so to their flocks they were
The anchors of their hopes, their beacon-lights
To guide their wand'ring steps to peace and rest.
Long may my country boast of men like these!

Fifth Evening.

THE EXILE—PARRY—FRANKLIN.

" Unhappy he, who from the first of joys,
Society, cut off, is left alone
Amid this world of death. Day after day,
Sad on the jutting eminence he sits,
And views the main that ever toils below."

" At evening to the setting sun he turns
A mournful eye, and down his dying heart
Sinks hopeless."

" He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes and share in his escapes."—*Cowper.*

Another day is past, and quickly comes
The cheerless night again, while from the North
The raging Boreas heaps clouds on clouds,
Through which the half-conceal'd and pallid moon
Peers hastily, as if afraid to show
Her silvery light amid the coming storm.

And now the soft and fleecy show'r descends,
And to the sweeping gust obedient flies
In drifts of dazzling whiteness, circling round
The window frames and doors, till ev'ry chink
The glitt'ring burden bears. The shiv'ring swain
Piles up fresh fagots on the sparkling fire;
The shutters clos'd, all huddling side by side,
The household list'ning, creep around the blaze;
While some their thrilling frightful tales rehearse
Of ghosts and goblins dire, of murders foul,
And restless spirits rising from their graves,
That freeze the blood and raise the hair on end.
Closer they creep, and closer still, to hear
The wond'rous legends told by ancient dames,
Ofttimes repeated and as oft believ'd.

Nor to the kitchen is the scene confin'd:
The parlour shares its influence, and asks
A corresponding theme. And what so fit
As in a night like this, of Oby's banks
And wild Siberia's frightful wastes to tell,
Where exiles weep their joyless lives away.

Alas, for him who to its darksome mines
Is doom'd for life, where sunbeams never shine,
Nor dewy morn, nor twinkling stars appear,
But endless night, and misery, and woe.
That light which cheers all nations cheers not him;
The smoking torch his sun, his evening star
The lamp which guides him to his flinty bed.

The morning breeze for him no longer yields
Its balmy fragrance or its bracing air,
But deadly damps and floating vapours rise,
And on his aching brow their horrors fling.
For him no groves, nor fields, nor gardens bloom,
Nor fruits, nor flow'rs; they live, but not for him.
Not e'en the plants that ornament the tomb—
The deadly nightshade, cypress, or the yew.
Around him no Silurian landscape spreads,
Nor show'rs descend, nor murm'ring rivers flow,
Or if they flow, they flow for him in vain.
His time is counted by his daily tasks,
His years and minutes by his sighs and tears.
All hope is fled—that hope which clings to man
In sorrow and in death is lost to him,
And felt no more. One day of rest alone
Throughout the toilsome week the exile knows
For pray'r and weeping. Soon the day is past,
And Monday drives him to his task again.

But now let fancy rove midst freezing storms
To those inhospitable northern climes,
And to that fatal strait—the Briton's grave—
Where Parry's crew a dreary winter pass'd,
Lock'd up in ice, and wall'd around with snows.
But even there enjoy'd their Christmas feast,
And fed, well-pleas'd, on good old English fare.
Where noble Franklin and his seamen fell
By woful famine, or the murd'rous spear,
The luckless victims to their country's fame.

For them the tear of sympathy shall fall,
As the dark page of history recounts
Their wanderings and death. E'en now that page
Unfolds a tale of woe humanity
Contemplates with dismay, and o'er the whole
Would draw with pity'ng hand a veil to hide
The last sad scene that clos'd their brave career.
How many gallant British sons have died,
How many noble hearts exhausted sunk,
In those wild regions of unceasing snows,
While seeking useless seas and dang'rous coasts
Which nature seals with never ceasing frost.
Ah, there is fix'd stern winter's dreary throne,
His palace there, hard by the Pole it stands,
A mighty fabric, crown'd with countless spires,
Huge domes and turrets of perpetual ice,
And everlasting snows. Built without hands—
Old as the world—where one long day and night
Divide alternately the year, and where
The weary sun seeks long for rest at eve,
And, when he sets, delays again to rise.*

* Intelligence which may be fairly considered decisive has at last reached this country of the sad fate of Sir John Franklin and his brave companions. Dr. Rae, whose previous exploits as an Arctic traveller have already so highly distinguished him, landed at Deal on Sunday, and immediately proceeded to the Admiralty, and laid before Sir James Graham the melancholy evidence on which his report is founded. Dr. Rae was not employed in searching for Sir John Franklin, but in completing his survey of the coast of Boothia. He justly thought, however, that the information he had obtained greatly outweighed the importance of his survey, and he has hurried home to satisfy the public anxiety as

The mind of man a stimulus requires
To urge it on. In noble Cook, who dar'd
To navigate the seas of southern climes,
This pow'r conspicuous shone. By nature plac'd

to the fate of the long-lost expedition, and to prevent the risk of any more lives in a fruitless search. It would seem from his description of the place in which the bodies were found that both Sir James Ross and Lieut. Bellot must have been within a few miles of the spot to which our unfortunate countrymen had struggled on in their desperate march. A few of the unfortunate men must, he thinks, have survived until the arrival of the wild fowl about the end of May, 1850, as shots were heard and fresh bones and feathers of geese were noticed near the scene of the sad event. The following is Dr. Rae's report to the Secretary of the Admiralty:—

"*Repulse Bay, July* 29, 1854.

"Sir,—During my journey over the ice and snows this spring, I met with Esquimaux in Pelly Bay, from whom I learnt that a party of 'white men' (Kabloonans) had perished from want of food some distance to the westward, and not far beyond a large river containing many falls and rapids. Subsequently, further particulars were received, and a number of articles purchased, which places the fate of a portion, if not of all, of the then survivors of Sir John Franklin's long-lost party beyond a doubt—a fate as terrible as the imagination can conceive. The substance of the information obtained at various times and from various sources was as follows:—In the spring, four winters past (spring, 1850), a party of 'white men,' amounting to about 40, were seen travelling southward over the ice, and dragging a boat with them, by some Esquimaux, who were killing seals near the north shore of King William's Land, which is a large island. None of the party could speak the Esquimaux language intelligibly, but by signs the natives were made to understand that their ship or ships had been crushed by ice, and that they were now going to where they expected to find deer to shoot. From the appearance of the men, all of whom, except one officer, looked thin, they were then supposed to be getting short of provisions, and they purchased a small seal from the natives. At a later date the same season, but previously to the breaking up of the ice, the bodies of some 30 persons were discovered on the continent, and five on an island near it, about a long day's journey to the north-west of a large stream, which can be no other than Back's Great Fish River (named by the Esquimaux Oot-ko-hi-ca-lik), as its description and that of the low shore in the neighbourhood of Point Ogle and Montreal Island agree exactly with that of Sir George Back. Some of the bodies had been buried (probably those of the first victims of famine), some were in a tent or tents, others under the boat, which had been turned over to form a shelter, and several lay scattered about in different direction. Of those found on the island, one was supposed to have been an officer, as he had a telescope

In humble station, and of lowly birth,
From wealth and fortune seemingly debarr'd,
He, by his persevering spirit, gain'd
The wreath of fame and glory which he sought.

strapped over his shoulders and his double-barrelled gun lay underneath him. From the mutilated state of many of the corpses and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the last resource—cannibalism—as a means of prolonging existence. There appeared to have been an abundant stock of ammunition, as the powder was emptied in a heap on the ground by the natives out of the kegs or cases containing it; and a quantity of ball and shot was found below high water mark, having probably been left on the ice close to the beach. There must have been a number of watches, compasses, telescopes, guns (several double-barrelled), &c., all of which appear to have been broken up, as I saw pieces of these different articles with the Esquimaux, and, together with some silver spoons and forks, purchased as many as I could get. A list of the most important of these I enclose, with a rough sketch of the crests and initials on the forks and spoons. The articles themselves shall be handed over to the Secretary of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company on my arrival in London. None of the Esquimaux with whom I conversed had seen the 'whites,' nor had they ever been at the place where the bodies were found, but had their information from those who had been there, and who had seen the party when travelling. I offer no apology for taking the liberty of addressing you, as I do so from a belief that their Lordships would be desirous of being put in possession at as early a date as possible of any tidings, however meagre and unexpectedly obtained, regarding this painfully interesting subject. I may add that, by means of our guns and nets, we obtained an ample supply of provisions last autumn, and my small party passed the winter in snow-houses in comparative comfort, the skins of the deer shot affording abundant warm clothing and bedding. My spring journey was a failure in consequence of an accumulation of obstacles, several of which my former experience in Arctic travelling had not taught me to expect.—I have, &c.,

"John Rae, C.F.,
"Commanding Hudson Bay Company's Arctic Expedition."

"List of articles purchased from the Esquimaux, said to have been obtained at the place where the bodies of the persons reported to have died of famine were found, viz.:—

"1 silver table fork—crest, an animal's head, with wings extended above; 3 silver table forks—crest, a bird, with wings extended; 1 silver table spoon—crest, with initials 'F. R. M. C.' (Captain Crozier, Terror); 1 silver table spoon and 1 fork—crest, bird with laurel branch in mouth, motto, '*Spero Meliora;*' 1 silver table spoon, 1 tea spoon, and 1 dessert fork—crest, a fish's head looking upwards, with laurel branches on each side; 1 silver table fork—initials 'H. D. S. G.' (Harry D. S. Goodsir, assistant-surgeon, Erebus); 1 silver table fork—initials 'A. M'D.' (Alexander M'Donald, assistant surgeon, Terror); 1 silver table fork—initials 'G. A. M.' (Gillies A. Macbean, second master, Terror); 1 silver table fork—initials 'J. T.;' 1 silver dessert

Though Fortune, wayward to her votaries,
Upon him show'd as o'er the waves he rov'd,
The strange vicissitudes of human life;
Till her revolving fickle wheel consign'd
At last this hero to to a savage death.
Upon his vessel now she smiles and wafts
Auspicious breezes o'er his vent'rous crew;
Now grasps the helm and guides the pliant bark
From shoals and rocks; now greets with myrtle bow'rs,
And pours nutritious manna from the trees.
Anon, her countenance assumes a frown,
And blust'ring winds, and storms tempestuous roar,
The billows rise, and sheets of liquid flame
Light up with lurid gleams the angry heav'ns,
And seem to set the swelling waves on fire.
Terrific thunders roll throughout the sky,

spoon—initials 'J. S. P.' (John S. Peddie, surgeon, Erebus); 1 round silver plate, engraved 'Sir John Franklin, K.C.B.;" a star or order, with motto, '*Nec aspera terrent.* G. R. III., MDCCC.'

"Also a number of other articles, with no marks by which they could be recognized, but which will be handed over with those above-named to the Secretary of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company.

"JOHN RAE, C.F.

"*Repulse Bay, July*, 1854."

Dr. Rae, of the Hudson's Bay Aretic Expedition, had an audience with Sir James Graham on Tuesday, at the Admiralty, on the subject of the probable fate of Sir John Franklin and his companions. The interview occupied a considerable time, in the course of which, we understand, Sir James Graham announced the intention of the Government to send out early in the ensuing spring an expedition, in order to make further search for the remains spoken of by the Esquimaux, and the command of the expedition was offered to Dr. Rae.—*Cambridge Independent Press*, October 28, 1854.

Whose deaf'ning peals appal the stoutest heart,
And shake the trembling vessel to its keel!
Again she calms the hurricane, the moon
Beams her bright radiance o'er the sparkling deep,
And all the foam-crown'd billows hide their crests,
The waters ripple from the vessel's prow,
The gentle murmurs of the fav'ring breeze
Now sweetly lull the mariners to rest.

How bless'd the weary seaman's slumbers then,
As in a calm refreshing sleep he dreams
Of distant friends, of home, of joys in store,
Of lisping love, and hours of sweet repose,
By dangers unalloy'd.

And such is life,
For ever changing as the changing winds,
That o'er the ocean sweep. Now, not a breath
To raise a ripple on its placid face,
But calm as innocence it seems to sleep,
As if unconscious of the wrecks it wrought;
Alluring man by its enchanting smiles,
To brave the rocks and tempt the hidden shoals
That lurk beneath, on which his shatter'd bark
Strikes fearfully, and sinks to rise no more.
How gay to thoughtless youth, yet unbaptiz'd
In floods of sorrow or adversity,
Does life appear, with all its gilded hopes,
Bright as a vision in the gloom of night,
Which fill the soul with happiness and joy;

But soon the fond illusion disappears
Before the stern realities of time,
Which on man's brow impress the seal of care,
Cast thorns and briars in his path, and teach
That pleasure has no lasting home on earth.

Sixth Evening.

RURAL LIFE AND REFLECTIONS THEREON.

"So water, trembling in a polish'd vase,
Reflects the beam that plays upon its face;
The sportive light, uncertain where it falls,
Now strikes the roof, now flashes on the walls."

Motto to Cowper's Poems.

Return, my Muse, to thy beloved theme,
And sing again of rural life and scenes,
As found at home. For sweet it is to mark
The winter's night, with all its changes wild,
To listen to the driving wind and rain,
That rage with fury o'er my cottage roof,
And by the contrast of the storm without,
Endear the peace and comfort felt within.
A loftier flight essay on bolder wings,
And tune the song to Heav'n's Almighty Lord,

Whose arm directs the elements and gives
To all created life its means and ends;
To earth its course, and to the sun its light,
And to the fruitful fields their herbs and flow'rs;
Raises the tempest in his wrath, or bids
The thunder's roar and lightning's flash to cease;
Controlling all with wisdom infinite,
And, as he first ordain'd, their order keeps.

By num'rous clouds oppress'd, the face of heav'n
Looks with a low'ring eye on all below,
And loud impetuous gusts from northern skies
Shrilly resound throughout the dreary vale.
Swiftly the sun its cheerless task performs,
And night treads quickly on the heels of day,
Usurping time, and sends the drooping fowls
And sluggish kine before their hour to rest.
Hark to the crowing of the strutting cock,
As in a melancholy mood he sings
His farewell clarion to the waning day.
The owlet, hast'ning from the aged beech,
Skims sullenly along the russet land,
And seeks with watchful eye his scanty meal,
Then flies for shelter to the ivied dome,
Or to the ruin'd castle's lonely walls,
Where, deep immur'd, he rests the livelong night,
And, as the tempest rattles o'er the earth,
Mingles his screaming with the moaning blast.
The threat'ning clouds in wild commotion toss'd,
Roll swiftly on before the driving gale,

Full charg'd and heavy, shutting out the day,
And cheerless night comes on with double gloom,
Cloth'd with ideal fears and terrors strange,
Which throng around the troubled peasant's breast,
In superstition train'd; and, warp'd by fear,
He listens trembling, as with haggard eye
He sees the flitting lights and shadows dance
Along the ceiling or the plaster'd wall.
And now from stormy clouds the pelting rain
Pours forth in torrents, and the copious stream
O'erflowing, gives its burden to the meads.
The shepherd wakens with the earliest dawn,
And seeks with hasty steps his bleating charge,
Where on some eminence they shiv'ring stand,
Surrounded; and with glaring eyeballs view
Th' advancing flood that ripples at their feet.
Hard is his task, assisted by his dog,
Loud barking, to secure the simple flock,
And through the neighb'ring gate their steps impel,
Till one, more bold or startled than her mates,
Precedes the closely thronging dubious crowd,
Which slowly follow in a single file,
Till danger pass'd, they o'er the hills disperse,
And with responsive bleatings fill the air.

Far as the eye can reach, one glist'ning waste
Of turbid water deluges the plain.
Along the swollen stream the eager hern
Impatient follows, and with flapping wing
And note of discord, marks the changeful scene.

Her wonted stand no longer she discerns,
The osier isle, with tuft of rushes crown'd,
Or pebbly brook, where oft on summer's eve,
With eye intent, she mark'd her scaly prey;
Disturb'd, she flies to her accustom'd haunt,
Of some lone elm, where motionless she sits,
Pensive and gloomy, on the topmost bough.
But now, with outstretch'd neck and sudden scream,
She marks the cautious peasant drawing near,
And nearer still, with deadly weapon arm'd,
In leafy bushes hid, or else conceal'd
By reedy ditch; he eyes the measur'd space,
And closer creeps; alarm'd, the watchful bird
Slowly expands her ample wings, and speeds
To safe and distant plains her cheerless flight;
Around she wanders, till returning eve
Begins to spread her mantle o'er the world;
Then to the well-known marsh she wends her way,
With courage re-assur'd, to satiate
The cravings of her hungry appetite
Upon the finny brood which throng the pools.

Thus fancy, wand'ring in excursive flight,
Depicts, as in a polish'd mirror seen,
Rain, clouds, and storms; and birds, and timid flocks,
And fields, and spreading floods; and draws from each
Something to please and lead the heart to God.

Nor to the fields alone, nor to the sky,
With all its airy tenants, does the Muse

Confine its wanderings. The Book of Life
Is in a village read, and seen as true,
As in the cloister'd shades of learned Cam
Or classic Isis, or the busier scenes
Of Thames or Mersey. Here, too, the Preface
Of that Book appears, and spreads its leaves alike
For all to study and reflect upon,
Who live to ponder on the fleeting past
Of three-score years and ten. A Book of Fate,
With hieroglyphics mark'd. Mysterious
And perplex'd, and foul'd with many a blot,
With errors marr'd, or pass'd unheeded by.
Yes, such the Book! and such its pages show
Which open to us from the dawn of life.
Its glitt'ring *Title* first attracts our eyes;
Its gay *Contents* we quickly call our own;
But, ah! as wiser grown with age and care,
Maturity weeps o'er its gilded leaves,
And points her finger to its closing page,
Where *Finis*, sorrowing, ends the mystic whole!

The parting day falls heavy, dark, and dull,
And clattering feet are mingled with the blast,
And driving rain that on the casements beat.
The Village School throws wide its ancient doors,
And discipline relaxes for a time.
Hark to the joyous call of noisy boys,
Cheering each other through the well-known street,
As each, on home intent, his course pursues.
And dear to him that home, and dear the smile

Of those he meets around the cottage fire,
Fresh stirr'd and blazing by a mother's hand.
Sweet is a mother's love, and sweet the smiles
Upon the bonnie bairns who claim her care.
What though their garments, soil'd by careless sport,
Call forth a passing frown; it flits away,
As does the shadow from the morning sun.
Love has the mastership: they know it well,
And slyly turn their faces for the kiss,
That falls, expected, on their ruddy brows.
I love to see them, and to hear them too;
For what has poverty to cheer but this?
And made more dear and precious by the thought
'Tis all they have to call their own and claim,
And all to look for comfort and for hope,
When age and want, oh, sad and ill-match'd pair,
Close o'er this troubled world the scene of life!

The fond emotions of a mother's breast,
When call'd to action by necessity,
Confirm the truth, by gentle poets sung,
That poverty dreads more and longer mourns
The parting from a child for weal or woe,
By death or seeking fortune in the world,
Than does the owner of the lordly dome
That throws its shadow o'er their lowly cot.
Nor less the child the loss of home deplores,
However humble be the home she leaves;
Nor does she less lament that tender love
That bless'd her with a mother's pray'r at night,

And bless'd again at morning dawn's return,
Although that mother weeps the loss of all.
If this be weakness, be ye kind, ye rich,
And pity what is weak. The softer sex,
Cast in a diff'rent mould and tend'rer far,
Feel this much more than men and more require.
Brought up in rich, exhilarating hope,
That held a cup, deceitful, to her lips,
Some luckless maid seeks shelter from the storm
That hangs suspended o'er her path of life,
By teaching others what in happier days
Were look'd upon and cherish'd by the smiles
Of those most dear—some tender parent's love,
Or friends now hidden by the silent grave.

Be kind and sympathise, ye favour'd few,
With those thus thrown upon you for a home,
Who give you all their talents, all their time,
Their days and nights, even their very thoughts,
And wear a cheerful countenance upon
A broken spirit and a sinking heart.
Let not the frown—and worse than frowns, the smile
Insidious and misplac'd—play on the cheek,
To crush the reed already bruis'd, nor let
The flippant tongue give utterance to words
It neither feels nor means. Hear that soft sigh,
And mark the gushing sob, restrain'd, not lost,
As harsh rebuke, uncall'd for, undeserv'd,
Falls on the list'ning ear of some poor maid,
To rend her gentle and her throbbing breast.

It is not far to wander for the eye
To meet this broken heart, this bruised reed,
Too often trampled to the dust by those
Who ought by ev'ry tie to honour dear
And soft humanity to shelter it,
As a flower that bends its lowly head
Beneath the with'ring blasts of winter's cold!

Now pity claims the Muse's aid to tell
Of that industrious poverty which plies
The busy needle through the livelong day,
And oft the livelong night, for bread alone!
Whose hours are counted, and whose time is watch'd,
Lest labour should remunerated be
Too highly, and that something more than bread
Be added to their scanty, daily fare!

Can this be so, or does the Muse exaggerate,
And tell the sad and cruel tale too true?
That England's daughters, fair and delicate,
Toil till the fingers lose the pow'r to move,
And the worn trembling limbs refuse to act,
Whilst the pale pallid cheek and beating heart
Sink 'neath the pressure! Shame on the world—
Oh, harsh and cruel world!—to see all this,
And see it all unmov'd, until the Press,
That pow'rful engine to awake the heart,
Painted the picture with the glow of life,
Holding it up to well-deserved scorn,
Till Christian sympathy at last awoke,

And hasten'd to relieve. Poor simple tools
For wealth to work with, may you find at last
The homes you seek in a more genial clime,
And hearts to guard and shelter you from harm

Seventh Evening.

SUNDAY

And now united prayers arise,
And waft their incense to the skies;
Now thankful voices loudly raise
To God the thankful hymns of praise.
* * * *
Not dress'd in superstition's cowl,
With stripes to terrify the soul,
But come array'd in robes that flow
Unsoil'd, and pure as mountain snow,
Safe harbinger of peace to men,
Ere they return to dust again.

Hail, holy Sabbath, day of welcome rest
To man and beast, but more to man assign'd,
To cease from labour, and to raise the soul
From earth, and all its worldly cares, to Heav'n!

Oh, for an angel's voice, or prophet's lyre
From Holy Land, to sing Thy praises, Lord;
As he of old, who by the waters sat

Of Babylon, and tun'd his harp to Thee,
So help me, Lord; and whilst I sing Thy pow'r,
My weakness aid, and on my darkness beam.
Fain would I paint Thee in Thy glory bright,
With all Thy wond'rous works around Thee rang'd,
The sun and moon adoring Thee, and all
Created life attuning forth Thy praise.
Too great Thy wisdom is for eye to see;
Incomprehensible Thou art in all;
Thy pow'r too vast for human minds to scan;
As perfect in an atom as a world,
And yet in ev'ry part complete and whole!

Can there be found on earth a reas'ning man
Who sees all this, and, knowing it, forsakes
The God who made him? Can he look around,
And on the wide-spread prospect gaze, and mark
The sun and all the heav'nly host perform
Their daily task, and yet his God deny?
Or, when he listens to the midnight storm,
And sees the wild and vivid lightnings blaze
That through his curtains flash, and hears the loud
And oft-repeated peal, resounding far
Throughout the heav'ns, can he look on, and say,
"All this is chance?" Or can he calmly view
The strife that rages o'er his head without,
Nor fear the Pow'r he thus defies may hurl
Th' avenging dart to overthrow his pride?
O say, vile worm, why art thou not destroy'd,
Since thou deni'st the Great Almighty God,

Eternal One, who wings the elements,
And drives the glaring bolt along the sky?
Think not, vain atheist, thy sword can mar
The buckler of the Lord! He reigns above,
O'er all the universe, in glory great,
Unhurt by tongues and unassail'd by hands.
Is man to be His judge who rules o'er all?
Worm of the earth! Go, tremble and obey!
What is thy wisdom? Vanity at best!
A painted fly—a vapour in the air—
A sunbeam dancing in a summer's sky!
And what thy wealth? Dross, cumbering the ground,
And evanescent as the morning dew!
And what thy life? The drawing of a breath!
And what thy death? Th' absorption of a drop
From ocean's restless flood; a fading flow'r;
A ripen'd acorn falling from its tree;
Or as the grain of dust that drifts at eve
Across the boundless plains of Afric's sands!

Say, was it man that made the seasons? Say,
Does he with verdure clothe the world? Can he
Command the welcome show'rs which gladden earth,
And make all nature smile? Or has he pow'r
To calm the storm and bid the whirlwind cease?
Or does he lead the swallow to its nest
Or guide the eagle to the solar light?

Know then, proud worm, there is a sea whose depths
Were never fathom'd by the pride of man.

Thou mayst indeed with restless steps ascend
The mountain tops of Andes or the Alps;
Or on the heights of Himalaya dwell;
Or rove beneath th' inclement Polar sky;
Yet in thy wisdom be in error still!
Or man, with Newton, may approach the clouds,
Explain the ebbing and the flowing tides;
May show the rays that make the rainbow shine;
Explore the Milky Way, and leave behind
Old Saturn and the distant Georgian star!
Still higher may advent'rous fancy soar,
With Milton range, and with poetic fire,
Describe the angels, cherubs, seraphs, saints,
And all the mysteries of heav'n's bright world,
Nor stop at great Jehovah's throne itself;
But that's a path no human eye can reach,
Awful, interminate, unknown to all!
For who, by searching, can develope Thee?
Thou Great Unknown—mysterious Three in One!
What human being can attempt to scan
The order of Thy wisdom, or to weigh
Thy power and greatness—shewn in all
Inscrutable and wise? Shall man attempt—
The child of yesterday—to scale the heav'ns,
And in his pride to teach his brother worm
More than the oracles of God reveal?
Human myself, to Truth Divine I bow,
And lay my reason at Thy feet, O Lord!
Beyond his reason what can man attempt?
His strength but impotence, what can he do?

What can he say, but "Lord, Thy will be done!"
"Thy will be done" proves more than many a page
Of sophistry, of ignorance, and pride.
'Tis better far to read God's word in faith,
And all its heav'nly precepts to obey,
Than vainly seek to know how God exists,
And whence the wonders of creation spring.
'Tis not for man God's essence to explore—
'Tis not for man His wisdom to dispute,
Nor canvass it in words; but in his works
To feel it and adore! Grant me, O Lord,
To do whate'er Thy love would have me do;
In this world satisfied to know Thy pow'r,
And in the next to see Thee as Thou art!

Thrice happy he, who on the Sabbath eve,
In meditation wrapt, lifts up his heart
And all his soul in grateful praise to God!
Or, with his list'ning family around,
Reads from th' unerring page of Holy Writ
Of peace and pard'ning grace from Christ, the Lord!
O, would'st thou know His boundless grace and love,
Let thy imagination oft recall
The time He left the glorious throne above,
And came to visit fallen man on earth,
To bless the suff'ring and to save the lost!

See, through the crowded streets of Salem, see
The Saviour walk! Behold Him lowly bend,
And cause the deaf to hear, the blind to see,

The sick to smile again, the lame to leap,
And from the grave restore the dead to life!
Behold Him stooping from His native skies,
That self-degraded man might be repriev'd
From sin and death, and live in bliss with God;
Himself a houseless wand'rer, that the poor
Might find a home; and sleepless, that the head
Of aching poverty might find repose.
Behold Him meekly suff'ring on the Cross,
On which He bow'd submissively and died,
And pray'd for man—for thoughtless, sinful man,
Who scoff'd and triumph'd at His mournful fall!

Adore His name! Adore Him heav'ns and earth!
Ye sons of men in humble worship bow
To Him who reign'd above, supremely great,
Yet condescended to man's low degree,
And wore the bonds and shackles of the flesh,
That He in man's salvation might display
His boundless love, His wisdom, and His pow'r!

God's works are wonderful, sublime, and great,
Too vast, indeed, for man to comprehend;
But from God's Word a cheering light is giv'n,
To guide man's erring steps, and lead him on
Through life's dark valley to his rest in heav'n.

Yes, God is Love! we feel it in our hearts,
In ev'ry breath we draw His pow'r is shown.
Conspicuous in wisdom as in pow'r,

But Love to Man more wonderful than all!
Yet man the least returns it. Man, to whom
The faculty of thought alone was giv'n,
With all the aid of reason—fit to judge
Of right and wrong. Yes, man, ungrateful man,
Can yet forget his duty, and neglect
The Lord who gave him all. Refuse to give,
For this Almighty Love, the simplest praise.
Fill'd with ungrateful selfishness, he thinks
One day in seven too much to yield to God,
And all the week too little for himself.

Go, unbeliever, lay thy warfare down,
Affect no more to brave Jehovah's might,
But to His righteous rod submissive bow,
And, trembling, own the Being of thy God!

Eighth Evening.

AGNES; OR, THE VILLAGE FUNERAL.

"The voice said, Cry; and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth."—*Isaiah* xl. 6, 7.

My weeping Muse would wake the plaintive lyre,
In melting, moving, melancholy strains,
For death demands a feeling, solemn dirge
To signalize his triumph o'er poor, weak
Humanity. Yon slowly tolling bell,
Which vibrates mournfully around, proclaims
A lovely maiden's funeral, and fills
Her sympathising friends with grief and woe.

I knew poor Agnes well in former days,
When o'er her clear and dimpled cheeks the bloom

Of healthy childhood spread its rosy hues.
O, she was beautiful! Her sparkling eyes,
Which beam'd with lively animation, told
The joy which reign'd within her guileless breast.
How like a gladsome fairy queen she seem'd
Among her lov'd companions, as she play'd
In artless innocence; her glossy hair
In graceful ringlets waving in the wind!
I've listen'd to the merry laugh, and watch'd
Her light and airy movements as she danc'd,
Or nimbly twirl'd her skipping rope around.
Oft have I heard, entranc'd, her dulcet notes,
As sitting near my door, she sweetly sung
Some lively sonnet, or some pleasing hymn,
And felt my bosom eased of half its cares.
Yes, she was fair, and good as she was fair!
I've watch'd her place within the wither'd palm
Of wand'ring poverty that sought relief
Her little store of hoarded pence, and weep
O'er grief and pain beyond her pow'r to cure!

But time pass'd on; this lovely bud of youth
Bloom'd into womanhood; no fairer plant
E'er grew in Paradise; no lovelier Eve
E'er grac'd the sinless bliss of Eden's bow'r!
She seem'd an angel clad in mortal form!
A faultless pattern for the sculptor's art!

Nor did her outward loveliness belie
The graces of her soul. She "worshipp'd God

In spirit and in truth," and strove to pay
A due regard to all. No daughter e'er
More faithfully a daughter's part fulfill'd:
No sister's love shone forth with brighter ray,
A brother or a sister's soul to cheer.
The worn contracted cheek of gloomy want
At her approach relax'd into a smile,
And bless'd the lily hand that proffer'd aid.
The house of mourning found in her a guest
To sympathise with grief, to soften pain,
To smooth the suff'rer's pillow, and to make
The bitter potion lose its bitterness,
And misery itself forget her woes.
Kind and affectionate she was to all,
And, loving all, she was by all belov'd.

But, ah, within her lovely fragile frame
The blighting worm of dissolution lurk'd,
And pale consumption mark'd her for his prey!
Too soon the hollow cough—the hectic flush—
The short embarrass'd breath—the vivid eye—
The wan and fallen cheeks—the pallid lips—
The trembling limbs—and wasting frame—appall'd
Her loving parents, brothers, sisters, friends!
How bled their hearts with anguish at the thought
Of coming death! How anxiously they watch'd
The varied phases of the dreaded foe!
One while despondency reign'd o'er their souls;
Again their fond, deluded bosoms hop'd
This drooping flow'r would raise its head again!

Thus hope and grief in turn their thoughts possess'd.
But, ah, their hopes were vain! She weaker grew
Until extended on a dying bed,
The fatal truth weigh'd down their souls with all
The crushing agony of speechless woe!
Say, if you can, what grief her parents felt!
Say, have you e'er a blooming daughter lost,
Just in the dawn of virtue's lovely day,
The joy, and hope, and prop of hoary age?
Then, well you know the bitter cup they drain'd,
But words must fail this sorrow to express!

But let us view that sad, instructive scene,
And all its touching incidents portray.
The hour—the dreaded hour of death—arrives.
See, round her bed her dear relations kneel,
And wait, with pray'rful hearts and throbbing breasts,
The final stroke; while she alone is found
With cool composure settled on her brow!
Her eyes with more than mortal lustre beam
With fond affection on her grieving friends.
She whispers now a soothing, earnest pray'r
For those she loves, and strives to comfort all,
But strives in vain. "Weep not for me," she said,
"For I am happy—happy e'en in death!"

O, well may she thus breathe her heart's content,
For downy feathers from the angel-wings
Of resignation—faith, and hope, and love—
Make light the bed on which she calmly rests!

Exhausted nature sinks: she seems to lie
In peaceful slumber, and a sunny smile
Plays o'er her faded cheeks. Again she wakes,
And on her youngest brother's head she lays
Her clammy, cold, attenuated hand,
And sweetly blesses him. Too much is this
For that poor sorrow-stricken child to bear!
That cold and freezing touch chills all his blood!
That tender blessing swells his inmost soul,
Bursts all the barriers of his pent-up grief,
Which finds an utt'rance in a plaintive wail!
That wail, as an electric shock, pervades
Both young and old, and all alike o'erwhelms
With mourning sobs, and sighs, and gushing tears!

Her gentle loving spirit shrinks, dismay'd,
From this wild torrent of impulsive grief,
And seems to flee away and seek for rest.
Her eyes, but partly clos'd, are glazing o'er
With deadly films, and all her breathings cease;
Her bloodless, quiv'ring lips now fall apart;
Her pulse now ebbs, now flows, then ebbs again;
And all around suppose her spirit fled!
This shock, though long expected, smites her friends
With sudden dumbness, as they stand aghast;
But, lo, a prodigy appears! This maid,
As if endow'd with more than mortal strength,
Springs quickly up, and seems again renew'd
With vigour and with life. "Hark!" she exclaims,
"What sweet entrancing music fills the skies!"

O, how sublimely beautiful appears
Her shad'wy form! She seems a spirit rais'd
To publish gladness to a mourning world,
As rapture radiates from her sparkling eyes!
Mark how her speech astounds, yet cheers her friends.
"I see a vivid rainbow's wide expanse,
Sweet emblem of the faithfulness of God!
'Tis fring'd with cherubs, seraphs, and with saints
In countless numbers—all with glory bright—
As though they crowded round the bounds of heav'n
To watch a kindred spirit enter there!
And 'neath this bow, on skies of richest blue,
My guardian angels, rob'd in glist'ning white!
Like gentle softly-breathing turtle doves,
On trembling pinions soaring o'er their nests
To lure their eager young to mount and fly,
They hover o'er me on their quiv'ring wings,
That drip with show'ry, silv'ry, sparkling drops
Of light, like jewels, streaming from the sun!
See, how they beckon, smile, and call me home!
O, yes! I see, I see! I come, I come!
Father, mother, sisters, brothers—all, fare——"

The spirit leaves its tenement of clay,
Which gently sinks upon the downy bed,
A lifeless, yet a lovely, mortal, wreck!
Say, was it fancy, when her awe-struck friends
Distinctly heard the voice of her they lov'd,
In distant—yet more distant—dying notes,
Repeating in the skies, "Farewell, farewell!"

How great the solemn mystery of death!
How hid from feeble man the future world!
Yet, when the mortal coil has run its length,
And, from its fibres' weakness or its age,
Can bear no more the straining weight that turns
The hands that mark the days, and months, and years
Upon the dial plate of human life,—
Strange sights are often seen, strange sounds are heard!
Yes, sights and sounds, unseen, unheard by all
But those whose souls are ready to forsake
Their crumbling, earthly tenements, and wing
Their swift, mysterious flight, to other worlds.
By some, like this young maiden, sights to cheer
And sounds which animate the mortal clay,
Bedew'd with death, and heav'nly gladness shed
On ev'ry feature, while the joyful soul
Anticipates a blissful rest with God.

Far otherwise with him whose life mis-spent,
Affords no pleasing hope beyond the grave.
When lying restless on the dying bed,
How often dreadful demon forms intrude
Their hellish visages, where'er he turns
His terror-stricken eyes, and seem to claim
His now departing spirit for their prey!
What scenes of horror compass him around,
Freeze up the languid current of his veins,
And clothe with chilling drops his fever'd brow;
While awful sounds, and words, invade his ears,
Which burn their impress on his inmost soul,

Fill him with agonizing, helpless fear
Of coming woe, whose dread intensity
Stamps frightful anguish on his tortur'd frame,
Which e'en the lifeless corse retains, as though
It were a chisell'd statue of despair!

Whence come these sights and sounds, which either cheer
Or add new terrors to the hour of death?
Are they the product of a mind diseas'd?
The groundless fancies of a fever'd brain,
When reason totters on its mortal throne?
Or does an all-wise Providence withdraw
(To stimulate the righteous in their course,
Or warn the wicked from his erring way)
The curtain that conceals the future state
From sinking mortals, ere the soul is launch'd
Into eternity? Is there bestow'd
Upon the dying the prophetic gift
Of clairvoyance, revealing heav'nly joys,
Or op'ning to the sight the gates of hell,
A foretaste of the certain doom prepar'd
For those who serve, or have not serv'd, their God?

Ah, who can tell? But howsoe'er this be,
Let Balaam's pray'r, not Balaam's life, be mine,
And like this maiden's be my glowing faith,
Like hers my latter end!

THE FUNERAL.

My sorrowing Muse, with flutt'ring, drooping wings,
Amid her flowing tears, would strive again
With trembling hands to tune her mournful lyre,
And sing, with falt'ring tongue, in humble strains,
The maiden's funeral.

"Man is but dust!"
Is he a haughty despot, at whose feet
Submissive nations bow the suppliant knee,
And tremble at his nod? Is he a prince,
Or noble, rev'lling in the pride and pomp
Of pow'r and luxury and wealth? Boasts he
Descent from hardy warrior ancestors,
Whose blood-red swords and valiant actions won
Those wide and rich estates which own him lord?
Is he a mighty orator, whose voice,
As furious tempests lash the sea to foam,
Can rouse to madness dull, lethagic souls;
Or, like the harp of Orpheus, can calm
Th' excited passions of an angry mob?
Is he a grasping, purse-proud millionaire,
Rejoicing in his bags of hoarded gold?
What then? Though he a demi-god be thought,
"Man is but dust, and shall to dust return!"
Death, that impartial leveller, will yield
An equal portion to the sons of men,
And grant to high and low alike A GRAVE!

What then avail their earthly might and pow'r,
Their lordly titles, or their wide domains?
Their wealth, indeed, may purchase useless pomp
To mock the sad reality of death;
But all the treasures of the world would fail
To purchase, undeserv'd, the pure, sincere,
And touching honours to poor Agnes paid.

No gaudy hatchment o'er the door proclaim'd
A scion of nobility remov'd;
No mercenary mutes were stationed there
With solemn looks to simulate a grief
Their hearts partook not of; no feather'd hearse
Her lifeless body shaded with their plumes;
No mourning coaches, drawn by coal-black steeds;
No train of vacant carriages, to show
Their owners' barren sympathy, were seen;
But there were tearful eyes, and throbbing breasts,
And aching hearts, to mourn the maiden's loss
And testify the love her virtues gain'd.

Nature inanimate, too, seem'd to join
With human sorrow and express her grief!
The sun, when hast'ning down his wonted course,
To shun th' affecting scene, drew o'er his face
A misty veil, when at the door appear'd
The feet of those who bore with tender care,
As though afraid to hurt the lifeless corse,
The coffin thence! The lofty elms, that rear'd
Their rugged trunks on either side the path

That led to her once lov'd paternal home,
Bow'd their bald heads, and gently sighing, dropp'd
Upon the simple path a show'r of tears.

Forth from the gate the sad procession came
With slow and measur'd step. Rang'd on each side,
Six weeping girls, in snowy garments clad,
Between them bore with nervous, trembling arms,
The wasted form of her they long had lov'd.
Next, as chief mourner, walk'd her fav'rite dog,
A curly, spotted spaniel, known to all,
The pet of ev'ry playful child, who join'd
To greet the lovely Agnes with a smile,
And gentle Fides to caress, as they
Together took their daily walks abroad.
But now his mournful air, and downcast head,
His troubled instinct, show'd, and drew from those
Who saw his fond fidelity a tear.
Her parents, brothers, sisters, relatives,
In order follow'd; when their village friends,
Both old and young, in readiness arrang'd,
To show their int'rest in the solemn scene,
And deep, spontaneous respect and grief
For their young friend, the mourning cortége join'd.
And as the lengthen'd train their way pursued,
Each passing traveller uncover'd stood
Aside, with hat in hand. At length they reach'd
The churchyard's entrance, when an aged priest,
Whose arms receiv'd poor Agnes at the font,
Pale with emotion, met, and introduc'd

The funeral train within the sacred walls.
There, on an ancient, carv'd, and oaken bier,
Which had for ages borne the village dead,
Plac'd midway in the centre aisle, the cold
Remains of honour'd Agnes rested. While
Her sobbing relatives in order knelt
(A touching spectacle of love and grief)
Around their dear one's coffin, which their garbs
Of mourning shaded over and conceal'd.*

And then the minister, in feeling tones,
In broken accents, and with falt'ring tongue,
The solemn, cheering, burial service read.
This duty over, round the open grave,
They all assembled, while the surplic'd priest,

* The ceremonies here related are such as were universally observed at funerals in Staffordshire forty years ago, and which the writer hopes still exist. As that county had some peculiar customs on such occasions which may interest the reader, they are here recorded. The first peculiarity was the shape of the coffin itself. Unlike the huge, shapeless, clumsy boxes generally seen, they were made of a graceful curve at the sides, somewhat in the form of a fish, so as to fit closely the human form. Next, on the day of the funeral, a minute bell, often muffled, was tolled from eight o'clock in the morning to the time of interment. Another custom was, that the body was never carried on the shoulders, but lifted by ornamental ropes, hooked into staples at the sides, about a foot from the ground. And when any person met the procession, he immediately stopped, and remained uncovered till it had passed; and had any one omitted this mark of reverence on such an occasion, he would have been considered a heathen, destitute of all proper feeling. The affecting impressions made on the writer's mind by witnessing funerals so conducted will never be effaced from his memory.

With holy, earnest, heartfelt pray'r, consign'd
The passive body to its parent earth.

O, 'twas a melting scene, when ev'ry eye,
Was dimm'd with tears, and ev'ry heart weigh'd down
With mutual sorrow for a common loss.
But faster flow'd their tears when they beheld
The faithful dog approach, and fix his gaze,
With puzzled look and mournful downcast eyes,
Upon the lower'd coffin in the grave.
And how were tears and sobs increas'd when one
With heedless step disturb'd the slipp'ry earth,
Which rolling down with dismal, hollow sound,
With agitation shook the nerves, and woke
A stunning echo in each aching heart!
E'en Fides started, rais'd his drooping head,
And looks of fury on th' offender cast;
He seem'd prepar'd to spring with all his strength
T' avenge the insult to his mistress giv'n;
But grief prevail'd and bow'd his head again.

The final blessing giv'n, the priest retir'd,
And all her relatives advanc'd to take
One last sad ling'ring look, ere they return'd
To their own desolated hearth. What words
Can paint the sorrows of the mother's soul,
The wringing anguish which convuls'd her breast?
How hard the task in humble pray'r to say
"Thy will be done," and leave her daughter there,
Had not, though nature bled, her ardent faith

Look'd through the veil of frail mortality,
To that bright world where round the throne of God
The dead in Christ shall meet again in bliss!
The hoary-headed father felt a woe
Too big for tears; his quiv'ring lips reveal'd
The inward misery which shook his frame,
As he in mournful silence led away
The partner of his sorrows and his joys.

The tears her brothers and her sisters shed,
As they a hasty farewell glance bestow'd
Upon the dismal resting-place, bespoke
Poor Agnes' goodness and their earnest love.

And now the crowd with reverence drew nigh,
In turn to pay their tribute of regard.
Led by a child, a feeble, poor old man,
With scatter'd, silv'ry locks, and furrow'd cheeks,
And sightless eyeballs streaming with his tears,
Who came, he said, to *see* the funeral
Of this young maid, declar'd he ne'er could hope
Again to find on earth so kind a friend,
"She was as daylight to his darken'd eyes,"
Then wish'd his guide to lead him home again.

And next a weeping child, with timid step
And troubled countenance, approach'd to bid
A long adieu to her she lov'd, and held
A Bible, wrapp'd in snow-white handkerchief,
The last and precious gift from Agnes' hand.

Down on her knees she sank beside the grave,
And cried in tones that mov'd each hearer's heart,
"O, who will hear me say my pray'rs again?"
And rais'd her little hands and sobb'd aloud.

An aged, helpless, grateful cripple, who
With his last sixpence hir'd an active youth
To bear him there, sat on the upheap'd turf,
Supported by a carv'd and mossy stone,
And by her sorrow and his own o'ercome,
Plac'd o'er his face his wither'd palms and groan'd
"My child! we all have lost our dearest friend!"

And each one in that throng began to tell
Some kindly anecdote of her they mourn'd;
And all the villagers, 'mid sighs and tears
Pronounc'd fair Agnes far too good for earth!

Full forty summers' suns have made our hills
And vallies, rich with grain, rejoice the earth;
And forty winters, cloth'd in hoary garbs,
Have spread their snowy mantle o'er the fields,
And bound our winding streams in icy chains,
Since this young maiden, entering into rest,
Receiv'd her prize—a crown that fadeth not.

How many changes in this fleeting world
Within this period have these eyes beheld!

How many scenes of pleasure and of grief
Have chequer'd life, in due proportion mix'd
By Wisdom infinite, that feeble man
Might not despair amid the ills of life,
Nor yet regard this lower world as heav'n.

O, Memory, reviewing by-gone years
Recalls to mind those num'rous, honour'd friends,
Who, one by one, have been engulph'd within
The ocean of eternity, and lost
To mortal view. Oft have I join'd a train
Of grieving, mourning friends, and o'er the grave
In silence shed a sympathizing tear,
And with the orphan and lone widow wept;
But ne'er before or since this maiden's death,
Have I beheld such touching incidents
As at her obsequies. The elder mourn'd
As for a lovely and an only child;
As for a sister lost the younger griev'd;
While all bemoan'd her as the friend of all.

Nor did this sorrow human breasts alone
Pervade, or human tongues alone bewail!
Her faithful dog, depriv'd of her caress,
Lost all he lov'd, and pin'd away and died.

Though years have pass'd and frosted o'er my head,
And many cares oppress'd my beating heart,
Since this event; yet neither time nor care
Have from my memory eras'd the sad,

Affecting circumstances, which my Muse
In humble verse would faithfully record.

The solemn service o'er, the last sad look
Cast on the gloomy, yawning resting place
Of her they lov'd, her relatives and friends,
And grieving crowd of neighbours who unbidd'n
Had fill'd the ample church, with reverent awe,
And silent pray'r, and throbbing breasts, retir'd,
And left the sexton to complete his task.
Not e'en a careless, thoughtless youth remain'd
To lend his aid by trampling in the soil.
No living creature in that lone churchyard
Was visible, till he, with practis'd hand,
Began his task upon the crumbling earth,
When Fides with a sudden bound appeared,
With flashing eyes and angry growl, and seiz'd
Th' official's arm. But shaken quickly off,
The spaniel found his utmost efforts vain;
Yet circling round and round, he bark'd aloud,
And foam'd, and trembling with his passion, sought
To interrupt his work. Then settling down,
In pleading, moaning tones he seem'd to beg
For mercy on his mistress, and express'd
So feelingly the agony he felt,
That e'en the harden'd officer of death
Bedew'd the mound he finish'd with his tears.
He sought to tempt the faithful creature home,
But found his various stratagems in vain;
So, griev'd and sick at heart, he turn'd and left.

Then near the grave the spaniel took his stand,
With lower'd head and drooping ears, with dull
And downcast looks, and blood-shot, weeping eyes,
While nervous tremors shook his shaggy frame,
And low, incessant, plaintive whinings spoke
His deep distress: but ever and anon
His heaving breast and panting sides reveal'd
The palpitations of his bursting heart;
And then, with head uprais'd, he howl'd a wild
And wailing dirge, to which the lofty bells
In melancholy, feeble notes, replied.
O, 'twas a piteous, piercing, hopeless cry,
That thrill'd the heart, and chill'd the list'ner's frame,
And, harrowing up the feelings of the soul,
Unseal'd the founts of grief, which poured forth
Warm gushing show'rs of sympathizing tears.

Nine cheerless days and chilling nights he kept
His mournful, dreary watch. No nipping frost
No drenching rains, no piercing wintry winds,
Could overcome the ardour of his love!
There, hour by hour, his doleful plaints arous'd
The sluggish echoes of the neighb'ring hills;
And struck a feeling chord in human breasts,
As daily he, in fainter notes, express'd
The deadly anguish of his stricken heart.

In vain the voice of kindness call'd him thence;
In vain the fondling child, who oft caress'd
Poor Fides in his happier moments, brought

A portion of his daily meal, and tried,
With tender words to tempt him to his food.
Her words of blandishment and pity fell
Unheeded on his ear; untouch'd the food
Remain'd. He hunger'd not—he thirsted not—
Save for his mistress, whom he mourn'd as lost.
Still on he griev'd and pin'd, till he became
A wasted shadow of his former self—
A shrivell'd picture of canine distress!

At length, as solemnly the church-clock struck
The midnight hour, and toll'd th' expiring year
Into the grave of Time, a trav'ller trod
The lonely churchyard's grassy path, and heard
The moaning, panting animal at work,
As though he strove to disentomb the dead.
And then a loud, unearthly, joyful cry,
And all was still! The morning's dawn reveal'd
The mystery which midnight darkness veil'd.
Soon as the sun arose, that trav'ller sought
The consecrated spot to learn the cause
Of that wild, yet exulting cry, which thrill'd
His beating heart, and why such silence reign'd
Within those sacred bounds, where Fides mourn'd
So long and dolefully his mistress lost.
'Twas soon explain'd. A sudden thaw that night
Unlock'd the frozen earth, and deep within
The yielding soil the dog had burrow'd down,
Till he the coffin reach'd, then yell'd with joy,
And sank self-buried on the breast he lov'd.

There was he found, cold, stiff, and lifeless—there
Was suffer'd to remain, and there a stone,
Rais'd by her loving, grateful friends, records,
"Here Agnes and her faithful dog repose."*

And, ever since, as village dames relate,
Whene'er that solemn midnight hour resounds
Which tolls the knell of the departing year,
The wond'ring peasant, as he passes through
That hallow'd ground, the shade of Fides sees,
And hears him, whining near the grassy mound.
Then quickly from the lofty heav'ns there shines
A soft mysterious gleam of light, as though
The peaceful moonbeams all their pow'rs unite
To pour upon that mourning shad'wy form
A brighter ray; and at its summit stands
A lovely female, cloth'd in dazzling robes,
Such as adorn the bless'd, and in a voice,
Which, musical and clear, entrances, while
It fills with awe the list'ner's frame, exclaims
"Peace, Fides! Peace!" The shaggy shade uplifts
His drooping head, and, recognizing her
Whom once he lov'd, he barks aloud with joy,
And springs, with animation, high in air.

The vision disappears and darkness reigns,
While hush'd is ev'ry sound, save that aloft,
Œolian notes and gently dying strains—

* A true tale.

As though the angels play on golden harps
The holiest, sweetest airs of heav'n, as they
Convey with joy that sainted spirit back
To her eternal home—salute the ear,
Entrance the 'wilder'd senses, and transfix
The feet of him who listens to the spot
Long after all these sounds and visions cease!

Such is the Village Legend, which delights
And awes the young, religiously believ'd,
And which to distant ages shall transmit
The memory of Agnes and her Dog!

Dog! must I call thee, faithful as thou wert
In weal or woe, nay even unto death!
Thine instinct, goodness, gentleness, and love
Might many a humbling, useful lesson teach
To man, unmindful of his kindest friends,
And raise a conscious, burning blush of shame,
To find himself more brutish than a brute
Which, though created by the self-same Hand,
Was made subservient to the creature Man!

Could I believe in transmigrated souls,
Or guardian angels cloth'd in earthly forms,
I might suppose some spirit from above,
For some light venial fault exil'd from heav'n,
As a slight punishment was doom'd t' assume
Thine outward shape, to wait with loving care
Upon the best and fairest daughter born

Of earthly parent, till her ransom'd soul
Laid down its mortal tenement, and rose
On wings of faith and hope to realms of bliss;
For 'neath thy curly hide and humble form
There beat a feeling, noble, grateful heart, poor Dog! *

* The Dog's Affection for his Master.

The following extract was sent by a friend to the Author after this work was in the press:—"Mr. O. M. Hopkins, late of Scottsbury, who died in January last, had a sprightly terrier, named "Nig," of which he was very fond. After the death of his master, Nig grew melancholy. Nothing the family could do seemed to amuse him. He could not be enticed from the side of his mistress, but would follow her about everywhere, grave and sedate, as though actually thinking of his dead master. One day a closet containing his master's clothing was opened. No sooner did Nig discover the garments, than he frisked about almost frantic with delight, evidently expecting his master to appear. When the poor animal discovered his error, he testified his disappointment by piteous and mournful howling. In May last, poor Nig grew more melancholy than ever. All attempts to induce him to leave the house were unavailing, until one day his mistress went to visit the grave of her husband. Then he followed, and arriving at the mound, commenced digging and moaning, testifying his grief in the most affecting manner. From that time he could not be enticed to leave the grave, but stayed day and night till he was starved to death. He was found there, stretched on the earth, cold and stiff."—*Bell's Weekly Messenger*, Sep^t. 10, 1855.

Ninth Evening.

THE VILLAGE WEDDING.

&c., &c., &c.

"Hark, to the wedding bells! now pealing high,
Now gently sinking in the morning sky."

"As yet 'tis midnight deep! The weary clouds,
Slow meeting, mingle into solemn gloom.
* * * * *
Where now, ye lying vanities of life,
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train,
Where are ye now?"—*Thompson's Winter.*

The morning dawn'd auspiciously, the sun
Broke through the threat'ning clouds, which, ere he rose,
With gloomy grandeur cloth'd the atmosphere,
Rejoic'd again to run his shining course,
And threw a welcome gladness on the world,
Dispersing all the humid mists and sleet,
That hung suspended o'er the rising ground,
Or veil'd the meadows near the flowing stream.

'Twas yesterday the slowly tolling bell
Fill'd sympathizing bosoms with a gloom
Funereal and sad. To-day, how chang'd
The sights and sounds! The sun in splendour rose
Amid the winter's sky, as if to chase
The dark memorials of death away!
The bells, those heralds both of grief and joy,
With loudly sounding cheerful peals proclaim
Some welcome news to gladden young and old.

"There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,"
The poet truly sung; and I believe
In nothing more this gentle feeling glows
Than in the pleasing notes of village bells,
Which fill the heart with joyfulness or woe—
Announce the wedding or the funeral—
Some glorious victory by sea or land,
Or prince's birth, or ring at even-tide
To call the peasant from his daily toil,
Or with a Sabbath chime salute the ear.

How pleasing that imaginative pow'r
Bestow'd on man alone, which oft recalls
To mental eye and ear those scenes and minds
Which gave delight, and thus prolong his joy!

I seem to hear the wedding peal once more,
Which rous'd the echoes of the early morn;
I see the marriage train from church return
With lively steps to grace the nuptial feast;

The lovely bride in firm and fond embrace
Her mother clasps, the guardian of her youth;
And on her bosom hides her blushing cheek,
Bedew'd with tears of gratitude and hope.
Behold the animated bridegroom, too,
Whose countenance reflects the tender joy
With which his heart o'erflows, looks on and smiles,
Rejoic'd to gain the lovely prize he sought,
The precious Rachel of his sev'n years' toil.

And see the aged sire his blessing give;
His eyes suffus'd with tears; his furrow'd cheek
With warm emotion glows; a silent pray'r
From his parental bosom flies, and borne
On fond affection's wings, it speeds to heav'n,
And asks for blessings on the child he loves.

Nor is the picture yet complete: I view
The blooming bridesmaids, radient with smiles,
And lovely in their innocence and youth,
Gaze with delight upon the moving scene;
Yet, while they sympathize with joy, and greet
The plighted pair, a glist'ning tear o'erflows
At thoughts of parting from the friend they love.

Ah! where's the man, with brow so knit with care,
Or heart so hard'ned by the freezing world,
Who can behold a tender scene like this,
Unmov'd, unsooth'd, nor feel the melting glow
Of soft humanity pervade his breast?

On country scenes and rural life the mind
Dwells with a pleasure that the busy world,
With all its fascinating lures and smiles,
Fails to bestow. 'Tis here the poet's pen,
With all its pow'rs of song, delights to rove,
And paint in magic verse his fairy dreams.
He loves not misanthropic solitude,
That flees from social intercourse with man,
But seeks for calm retirement which promotes
The noble converse of the soul, that leads
Man to his own resources, and to trust
Unto himself alone for peace of mind
In cheerful meditation. In each bud
Which in the garden grows, or running wild,
Spreads its gay blossoms to the sun, or seeks
The cooling shade, he marks the hand divine,
And muses and adores, and finds his God
In all and everything he sees and hears.
The vaulted sky, with all its blaze of light,
Wide-spreading trees, beneath whose shade he roves,
Become the books he reads, more dear to him
Than are the gilded domes of wealth and state,
Or wild ambition's toys. Hark, to the hum
Of blended voices from the distant crowd;
The reed-bird's twitter, and the dismal call
Of hollow-booming bittern, deeply hid
In sedgy marshes undisturb'd by man;
Or, when the shades of evening gather round,
The village bells' rich melody is borne
Upon the pennons of the gentle breeze,

As they, with loud and joyous tones, peal forth
In notes of victory. These are the sounds
And these the scenes that meditation loves;
And doubly dear the shady walks and groves,
Cheer'd by the gentle voice of her we love,
Or mix'd with sports of playful infancy.

If this be solitude, then, let me live
Sweet solitude with thee. Where never yet
The tongue of flatt'ry taught the bosom guile,
Or harden'd it to woe. Does this vain world
Man's nature change? Or does ambition spoil,
Or pride pervert the feelings of our race,
That man shall prove the enemy of man,
And, under guise of friendship or of love,
Betray to ruin? Shall he use that smile,
Bestow'd on him alone, and on his cheek
By nature's hand impress'd; or simulate
The workings of a good and gentle heart,
To flatter and deceive? Hid oft beneath
A meek dissembling mask, the villain's art,
Play'd off upon some too confiding maid,
Or on some friendly unsuspecting soul,
Stabs where it most professes, and destroys
Unfeelingly the hopes it call'd to life.

O, keep me safe from arts like these, and lead
My wand'ring steps into the groves again,
Where, from the world retir'd, my mind can take
A calm, yet solemn, retrospective view

Of all the varied scenes that checquer'd life
For three-score years and ten. These years my mind
Contemplates with dismay—so quickly pass'd
In useless vanity! O, man, proud man,
Could'st thou review thy wand'ring path and see
How num'rous were the weeds, how few the flow'rs,
And fewer still the blossoms bearing fruit,
Where would thy greatness, where thy wisdom, be?
Humbled to dust thy tow'ring crest would fall;
Thy wisdom would be folly, weak thy strength,
And pride and passion tempt thy heart no more.

But, hark, the clock strikes One! Say, did'st thou e'er
Awake at that still solemn hour, and mark
The silent witching moon, with sportive beams,
Throw on thy curtain her uncertain light?
Say, have thine eyelids clos'd in peaceful rest
And sweet oblivion, as they gently sank
In balmy sleep to dream of those you love?
What diff'rent feelings does this hour excite
In him whose heart, oppress'd with grief and care,
Mourns o'er the sorrows of a life mis-spent.
Or him whose couch is water'd with his tears;
Whose beating pulse his inward pain betrays,
As mem'ry brings to view in fev'rish dreams
The flitting shadows of his hopes and joys
Long past and gone, or hidden in the tomb.
Or in the widow'd mother's breast, who dreams
That her lost husband lives again; but wakes
To find the vision vain, her joy o'erthrown.

She wakes to weep, not for herself alone,
But for the pledges of his faith and love.
Weep on, poor widow'd heart, for nature gives
A kind relief in ev'ry tear that's shed.
Weep on and cast thy hopes upon thy God,
And lay thy sorrows at the feet of Him
Who bids in words of truth the trembling heart
"To seek Him in the hour of need, and He
Will comfort it!" Thus, from the tomb itself
The troubled mind shall draw its hopes of peace,
And mournful death and silent graves shall prove
The messengers of grace to calm our souls,
To make the sorrows that oppress us cease,
And send us tranquil to our rest again.

A solemn feeling rises in our hearts
And vibrates through our bosoms, as the clock,
With single, solitary note, proclaims
The lonely hour of ONE! The thrilling sound
Disturbs our rest—then slowly dies away.
In vain we wait to hear another stroke—
Another? No, not one! None comes to cheer;
But all is still and silent as the grave.
A fitting time for man to meditate,
And cast away the vanities of life;
To calm his passions, and to raise his soul
From earth to heav'n, and from himself to God!
Alone, yet not alone, for God is nigh,
In darkest night as in the noontide hour,
And present where his presence least appears.

Where hope is banish'd and all joy is lost,
There God is near to comfort with his love!
No part so small, so vast, so weak, or strong,
But owns his pow'r invincible and great.
Search through the universe, above, below,
Fly like the angels through the starry host,
Or roam through desert lands and foaming seas,—
Thou'lt seek in vain for some lone, vacant place,
Where God is not. Whose footstool is the globe,
Whose palace is illimitable space,
His throne the heavens, and his crown the sun!
All eye, all ear, all mind, He views the world,
Knows all, hears all, remembers, and decrees!

Tenth Evening.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

"'Tis come, the glorious morn! the second birth
Of heaven and earth! awakening nature hears
The new-creating Word, and starts to life,
In every heightened form, from pain and death
For ever free."—*Thompson's Seasons.*

Now sleeps the year in his cold cradle rock'd,
Nurs'd by the winds, and lull'd to rest by storms.
His seat of glory is the wide-spread heav'ns,
His curtains are the clouds, his lamp the sun,
And the pale moon and ev'ry star around
Lend their soft lustre to adorn his throne;
While in due order, as at first ordain'd,
The months, and weeks, and days pursue their course,
And bring their gifts to man—the garden gay
With flow'rs and fruits—the fields their golden grain—

And as the seasons roll their stores dispense.
Till clad in ice and snow, begirt with storms,
But warm with Christian charity and love,
December comes to usher Christmas in,
And crown with cheerful smiles the circling year!

Hark to the village bells, whose joyful peals
A welcome give to the auspicious morn,
Dear to the Christian as the hallow'd day
On which the Saviour of the world appear'd.

Hush! ye rude storms, and cease to blow, ye winds!
Some angel's voice in heav'nly music sings!
Arous'd from sleep, its melting, heav'nly strains
Entrance my senses, as it murmurs low,
Like the Œolian harp, by zephyrs fann'd,
But sweeter far. "Glory to God on High,"
It sings; "And Peace on Earth—Good Will to Man!"

Soft is the strain, and on my ear again,
Ere yet the morning sun re-gilds the sky,
The cheering voices of the village choir
In harmony this welcome carol chaunt.
"In Bethlehem is born Immanuel,
The Saviour and the Lord. Rise, shepherds, rise!
Behold His star and at His cradle kneel!"

O, those rich chords of earthly minstrelsy!
Sweet bells! And do ye now peal out aloud
To hail the glorious rise of Christmas morn?

And you, ye choristers, renew with joy
That song which issued first from angels' lips,
The type and pledge of Love Divine to man!
Lift then your voice, as prophets once foretold,
Lift up your voice in praise of matchless love!
This love excelling—God's best gift to man—
Shall cheer and comfort through life's rugged paths;
And when this chequer'd scene at length shall close,
Shall waft the soul aloft to brighter skies,
To happier climes, where sin and sorrow cease,
And all is harmony, and all is peace!

Sing on, sweet choristers, and hail the day
Which gave your hopes their birth. I love to hear
The well-remember'd words, and music, too,
Which charm'd in early life, and drew me oft
From my warm pillow, as the village clock
Toll'd its soft notes to call another day.
Dear then to me the midnight hour, and dear
The window panes, with frosted filligree
Adorn'd, in patterns of fantastic shapes.
And dear to me the frozen stream and snow,
And pendent icicles, betok'ning well
The sports and games of joyous Christmas-tide.

I love to see old Christmas usher'd in
As Christmas ought to be. With ivy crown'd,
And rosemary, and other kindred shrubs,
Which deck the hall, the cottage, and the church.
I would not have a leaf of them disturb'd;

They are to me as household gods, and tell
Of those we lov'd, and times long pass'd away.
Idalian wreaths, form'd by artistic hands,
To me are not so dear as is the branch
Of prickly holly, and its berries gay,
Entwin'd around the parlour ornaments,
Or in the windows plac'd: which seem to change
The cheerless winter into spring again.

This is the season, too, for gen'rous hearts
To open lib'ral hands. And there are hands
To follow the sweet impulse of the heart,
And to their suff'ring fellow creatures give
The aid that penury and age require.
Nor to the artizan or lab'ring poor
Be this bless'd boon of charity confin'd.
There is another and a suff'ring class,
Who better days have known, and prospects seen,
Who pine in secret, and who strive to hide
From an unfeeling world their wants and woes.
The widow'd mother, childless left, and he
Whose solitude is broken by no voice
Of friendship or of love. Some orphan maid,
Of gentle blood, neglected and forgot,
Thrown on a friendless and an unknown shore,
To be a wreck or starve—to sin or die!
To those afflicted thus the Muse would guide
The welcome hand of God-like charity:
To raise the drooping heart of those who thought
No more to smile. To make this hallow'd morn,

Rever'd for ages, to forget its frosts,
And be the day it was ordain'd to be.

Here, then, I rest, and here my labours cease,
With flowers glean'd from shady woods and wilds,
From verdant valleys and from groves and fields,
Mix'd up with visions sweet of cottage life,
Of rural pleasures and the joys of home.

Conclusion.

O, England! O, my country! thou, whose fam
Is dear to me as is the air I breathe,
Or as the vital current in my veins;
England! for thee I raise the patriot's pray'r,
Fervent, though lowly, to the Lord of Hosts!
And for my Sovereign I humbly ask
His blessing and His grace. And may she live
To add another wreath of glory round
Th' unblemish'd crown that decks her royal brow;
Rever'd and honour'd as a Christian Queen,
And to her subjects more endear'd by love
Than by the splendour of that crown itself.
I see her now with lib'ral hand bestow
The welcome gifts of royal charity,*

* On Saturday, her Majesty held an investiture of the Order of the Bath, when decorations of various classes were conferred on the Duke of Cambridge, Admiral Dundas, Sir De Lacy Evans, Lord Cardigan, and other Crimean naval and military officers. Sir Thomas Troubridge (who has lost both legs) was wheeled towards the royal presence, but, before he reached the place, the Queen descended from her throne, fastened the insignia on his breast, and extended her hand for Sir Thomas to kiss. Her Majesty

And with a sympathizing tear that adds
A ten-fold value to the precious boon,
Upon the wounded soldier's shoulder fix
The hard-won prize of Victory and War.
'Tis this, far more than all the pomp and pow'r—
Than all the pride and circumstance of Kings—
That makes the Sov'reign and the Queen belov'd,
And takes a firmer hold upon the heart
Than all the gems that deck her diadem,
And all the glories of her throne and state!
A throne as bright in honour and renown
As ever grac'd the page of history!

O, England! O, my country! once again
I ask a blessing for my native land!
That land where freedom reigns untouch'd and pure,
Unstain'd and bright; and where, when trod by slave,
His shackles fall, and the poor wretch is free!
Not all the wealth from India's golden sands,
Nor mines of sparkling gems and diamonds rich,
Are dear to me as this proud truth alone!
Not Tempe's Vale, though deck'd with blossoms gay,
Nor orange groves, nor trees of sweetest bloom,

afterwards dined at the Crystal Palace. On Sunday, the Queen, Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, and the Court attended divine service in the Private Chapel. On Monday, the Queen inspected 100 wounded and disabled Guards, recently arrived in this country from the Crimea. The men were mustered in the garden of the Palace. After the inspection, the Guards were conducted into the Palace, where a plentiful dinner was served to them.

Not spreading fields of never-dying flow'rs,
Are dear to me as is the sturdy oak
That shades thy plains, or the wild restless waves
That beat incessant on thy sea-girt shores!
Home of my fathers, England, ever dear,
Thy honour'd name is sacred to my breast,
And dear thy altars to my hopes and pray'rs!
O may sweet peace, with olive-branch, once more
Wave o'er thy fruitful fields its golden wings!
Bless thee in all—and noble make in mind
Thy Noble in estate—thy Warriors brave—
Godly thy men of God—thy Statesmen wise—
And long from anarchy thy People guard,
Loyal, not servile, bound in chains of love,
Of amity united—link in link
With those who guard them in the sacred cause
Of liberty—the Commons of the realm!

Bless thee once more, Britain, my native land,
And crown with peace and righteousness our Queen!

Thus ends my song. Farewell, my Muse, farewell!
Thou source of many joys, of hopes, and care,
No longer of thy frowns or smiles I tell,
Or seek that incense once so priz'd and dear;
But to my God I bow in silent pray'r,
With lowly heart to reverence His name,
Whose mercy thus has brought my shatter'd frame

Through all the changes of another year.
To see the Spring, with blossoms gay, once more;
And Summer shed its balmy fragrance round;
And Autumn richly yield its golden store;
And Winter's garb conceal the frozen ground;
And Christmas, smiling through its veil of snow,
Shine with a brighter ray to cheer the world below.

FINIS.

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